THE VIZIRS:

OR, THE ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.

VOL. II.

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THE VIZIRS:

OR, THE ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.

AN ORIENTAL TALE.

By Mad^E. Fauques De Vaucluse.

VOL. II.

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Volume the Second.

Page 10. YEZD is a city in the province of *Perſis*, or, as the Aſiaſtics call it, Parſiſtan: it has been rendered famous by being the place in which Zoroaſter founded his ſect and built his firſt idolatrous temple.

Page 33. Dagheſtan is the ancient *Albania*. The province of *Shirvan* has a port on the Caſpian Lake much frequented by the *Ruſſians*; and Derbend, its

its capital, was called by the ancients *Caſpiæ Portæ*, the gate of the Caſpian ſea.

Page 37. Kharezm is the country of the ancient *Chorafmii*, and lies on each ſide of the Gihon or *Oxus*.

Page 44. The antelope is a beautiful animal, of a ſlight make, and with eyes uncommonly black and large.

Page 81. The Green Sea is the *Perſian Gulf*.

Page 111. Caicaus is called by our writers *Darius the Mede*.

Page 112. The princeſs Firenkis is the *Mandane* of the *Greeks*, and her father Afraſiab their *Aſtyages*.

Page 155. Kiſhtaſb, whom the *Greeks* call *Darius* the *Son of Hyſtaſpes*, was better known by the *Europeans* than his father, becauſe he transferred the ſeat of empire from the province of Khoraſſan to that of Perſis, which is much nearer to them. He has been rendered famous by his embracing the ſect of Zoroaſter, and by his forcing his ſubjects to follow his example; which was done at the inſtigation of Giamaſb, his Vizir, a man known by the misfortunes in which he involved his ſovereign, by an abſurd

book

book of aſtrology, and by his more abſurd zeal for an hereſy which corrupted the pure belief of the Perſians. The adventures of Kiſhtaſb in his private life, the manner of his acceſſion to the throne, his ſeparation from his beloved brother Zerir, and their meeting at the head of the two armies, are recorded in the Perſian annals as here related.

Page 169. The country of Dilem is the ancient *Caduſii*.

——. Feridun, the fifth king of Perſia, was the ſon of Gemſhid. He imitated the virtues of his father, and more happy than he, recovered his throne

throne from the uſurper Zohac, whoſe cruelties and horrible death have given riſe to many fabulous ſuppoſitions in the Eaſtern tales.

Page 221. Ruſtem was the general of Kaikhoſru, or *Cyrus*, and a moſt celebrated warrior. This hero reigned in Segeſtan, the *Drangiana* of the *Greeks*, and in Zableſtan, their *Arachoſia*. He, and his anceſtors, held theſe principalities as a fief from the kings of Iran, whom they had ſerved with a valour hereditary in their family.

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THE VIZIRS,

OR,

THE ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.

THE laws of hoſpitality are held in ſuch a veneration amongſt the Aſiatics, that notwithſtanding the reſpect which Saheb bore to the meſſenger of the Sage,

he could not help blaming his anſwer to Zerir; but when he heard by whoſe orders he had ſpoken, his concern increaſed in proportion to the excellence of his heart, and he employed the penſive hours of night in conſidering by what means the misfortune of his amiable gueſt could be averted.

However, the prince was far from being uneaſy at the fatal threats, his mind, no leſs generous than haughty and paſſionate, refuſed not to acknowledge a fault though too likely to fall again into it; and as he condemned himſelf for his behaviour towards the ſlave, he took his words for the empty ſound of a reſentment

ment which he allowed to be juſt. To find Periſadeh was an hope that his own deſires were ſufficient to raiſe, and as to his finding her too ſoon, it ſeemed a meer paradox to his love.

Thus his thoughts being undiſturbed upon his own account, they dwelt only on the recital of Saheb, whoſe virtue excited his admiration, whilſt the moſt tender intereſt added to his curioſity of knowing how ſuch a dark web of fate had been unravelled.

No ſooner the enlivening day appeared, than Saheb and Zerir being led by the agitation of their reciprocal ſenti-

ments, went, ſeparately, to the grove. There having accoſted each other with the pleaſing ſmile of meeting friends, they ſeated themſelves upon the border of the fountain, when, at the entreaties of Zerir, Saheb thus continued his narration:

"When I was arrived at this laſt period of deſpair, and ſeemingly lifeleſs, lay entombed in the gloomy cell, ever-watching providence ſent me a ſuccour from whence it was the leaſt to be expected. Judge, prince, of my ſurpriſe, when being recalled to life, I found myſelf in the arms of Aſſar; I ſtarted back, and exclaimed;

"O juſtice

"O juſtice of Heaven, thou haſt reſtored me my ſtrength in order that I may puniſh him, by whom I have ſurely loſt all that I held dear; ſpeak, wicked man, continued I, where is Morad, Saphira, and the murdered Gulrouz?"

"A piercing cry was the firſt anſwer of Aſſar, who, looking at me with terror, ſaid, at laſt, in a trembling voice;

"Spare, oh! ſpare me, O dreadful executor of my juſt doom! avenger of the injured dead!—yet, no! if Gulrouz has ſent thee, take, take thy victim; ſummon all the other genii of darkneſs, and let them tear in pieces my guilty

heart.---Why art thou thus motionleſs?---then, it is always my own hand that muſt ſpill my devoted blood.

"In ſaying theſe words, the frantic Aſſar ſnatched my dagger from my ſide, and was going to plunge it in his own breaſt, when being prevented by two of his ſlaves, he fell into a trance, ſo painful, that my anger, giving way to compaſſion, I helped the ſlaves in their pious office towards him.

"At laſt, he began to be calm, and fixing his eyes upon me, he ſaid;

"O this is too much, gentle Saheb! your undeſerved goodneſs overcomes me.

Though

Though the Almighty has chaſtiſed me by the loſs of my reaſon, you have a right to revenge yourſelf for the complicated miſeries I have brought upon you! May I be enabled to relate a part of them, and to point a remedy!

"The words of comfort, which humanity, ſtill more than hope, dictated to me, having entirely ſoothed the wretched Aſſar, he thus proceeded:

"You have known from Saphira how the ſword of puniſhment, which was ſuſpended over my head, and which I had willfully overlooked, fell upon me. Unable to ſupport the ſight of my wounded

ſiſter, I flew from her, curſing Zoroaſter, Ardevan, and myſelf.

"I reſtored my ſlaves their liberty, and bade them leave me, being reſolved to retire to this arbour, which I had inhabited with peace and content before I met with Zoroaſter in a journey which I unfortunately undertook.

"As I feared to be followed to this my wiſhed-for grave, I wandered ſome time through the woods; when two nights ago, having laid myſelf down upon a rough bed of buſhes and briars, I heard the ſteps of two perſons, who ſeated themſelves at a few paces from me.

"Here

"Here we muſt ſtop, ſaid one of them, this wild horror cannot be penetrated farther; but we are at a ſufficient diſtance from your retinue, unburthen your heart to your friend, the ſound of confidence cannot be intercepted by malevolent ears.

"O Ardevan, exclaimed Zoroaſter, (for it was to him that this diſcourſe was addreſſed,) how difficult is the taſk of reigning over, or if thou wilt, of impoſing on the human mind! if, in moſt men, the weakneſs of underſtanding ſtores the field of credulity with innumerous ſheafs of enthuſiaſts, the wind of inconſtancy often ſweeps away the beſt part of the

harveſt, and the unhappy loſer muſt ſhew a ſerene look when the cloud of diſappointment preſſes hard upon his brow.

"Thou knoweſt not that the deſertion of Aſſar is to me a more afflicting piece of news, than the bad tidings thou haſt brought me from Yezd. As at thy arrival I bade thee attend him in the fatal expedition by which I loſe him, thou canſt not judge how fit an inſtrument he was for my purpoſes; as his ſoul, being fraught with a deep melancholy, renders him capable of every deſperate attempt. And canſt thou think that the revenge upon Guhrouz and Saphira thou haſt

haſt flattered me with, can make me amends for ſuch a loſs?

"He may yet return a ſuppliant at your feet, replied Ardevan; his grief, or rather his phrenzy when he ſaw his audacious ſiſter wounded by his own hand, was a weakneſs which will ſoon give way to the ſtrength of his rooted prejudices.

"How much thou art deceived in thy opinion! returned Zoroaſter; it is true, the ſight of the deareſt blood barbarouſly ſpilt, cannot ſtrike the heart of a fanatic. At the command of blind zeal, the father plunges the murdering dagger into the breaſt of his ſon; the mother tears in

pieces

pieces the fruit of her own womb; the brother betrays his virgin ſiſter while ſhe raiſes her innocent hands to implore his protection; and all the bonds of friendſhip are cut aſunder: but how ſoon nature regains her rights, when the wavering mind leaves ſome entrance to the light of reaſon!

"The faith of Aſſar was firſt ſtaggered by the pretended puniſhment of Saheb and Morad; for he wiſely thought, that he, who could have at wiſh a ſupernatural aid, would not have accepted the means which he propoſed in order to impoſe on the beholders.

"How-

"However, if his paſſions of love and revenge diſpelled the gleam of reaſon which I perceived ſhooting through his mind, it was not the ſame upon another occaſion.

The hand of terror engraved doubts and remorſe on his heart, when, in the midſt of our adorations, the worſhipped *fire* darted its dreadful ſparks upon us, when blaſting lightenings and claſhing thunders added new horror and danger to the direful eruption.

"I confeſs, ſaid Ardevan, that my very ſoul ſhuddered when I heard the account

count of that tremendous ſcene, and I wonder not that Aſſar took it for a mark of the divine wrath.

"Thus argue weak and proud men, replied Zoroaſter, when they are ſtruck by ſome uncommon, though natural accidents. To excuſe their ignorance and fears, they have created a Being to whom they aſcribe the unworthy taſk of obſerving their minuteſt actions; but if there were ſuch a Being, would he not look upon the ſpirited and dexterous man who enſnares vulgar minds, in order to quench his thirſt for fame, as he looks upon the crafty ſpider intangling in her web the unwary inſects in order to ſatisfy her hunger.

"At

"At these impious words, the impetuous waves of my indignation, anger, and shame broke down the mounds of a prudent caution, which the necessity of knowing the pernicious secrets of the impostor had set over them. I sprung forward like a serpent who has long smothered his hissing threats, and pants for throwing his dart after his watched prey. But the eagerness of my fury overruled its own purpose. Zoroaster heard the sound of my precipitate steps; and the shades of night being already dispelled, he saw me before I could reach his perfidious heart.

"His cowardly cries awakened his slaves, by whom I was instantly surround-

ed;

ed; but they alſo procured me the aſſiſtance of the generous Morad, whoſe looks of approbation animated my courage, whilſt his valour cleared his way to me.

"We fought like ſpirited lions againſt wily tygers, as our open attacks were returned by treacherous blows. Morad fell, pierced in the back by the dagger of the infamous Ardevan; and I was levelled to the ground by a ſhower of heavy ſtones, poured on my head by ſome of Zoroaſter's ſlaves, who had climbed the trees, in order to employ with ſecurity theſe diſhonourable weapons.

"When

"When, after many hours, I recovered the uſe of my ſenſes, I ſaw around me only thoſe of each party, who had breathed, or were breathing their laſt.

"As in the tranſports of my grief and gratitude, I embraced the inanimate Morad, I found that his heart retained yet ſome motion. I immediately bound up his wound, and wrapping him in my robe, brought him to this arbour.

"I ſhall not relate the ſurpriſe of Saphira in ſeeing me, nor mine in finding my retreat invaded by ſuch dear enemies, for we ſcarcely expreſſed our mutual ſentiments, our attention being engroſſed

by Morad, who happily was attended by the phyſician ſent for Gulrouz.

"While the ſkillful man was performing his office, and had raiſed our hopes, I anſwered the call of my love and duty towards my injured ſiſter, whom Saphira had prepared to receive me.

"I kneeled down by her bed-ſide, and with many ſighs implored her pardon; but ſhe interrupted me, and begging forgiveneſs for herſelf, ſaid, that if ſhe had not ſeen me with Ardevan, whoſe baſeneſs ſhe knew, ſhe would have endeavoured to make me relent, rather than have engaged ſo unhappily againſt me.

"Her

"Her amiable goodneſs, and the melancholy condition I ſaw her in, pierced my heart; yet I reflected with ſubmiſſion on the juſt decrees of Heaven, which doomed me to find in my peaceful deſerted cell an object ſo fit for depriving me of peace for ever.

"In the mean time, Morad being recalled to life, and his wound pronounced not dangerous, I returned to him, and told him with whom he was partaking my aſylum, upon which he expreſſed an ardent deſire of ſeeing Gulrouz; but refuſed to himſelf that ſatisfaction till Saphira had ſent his ſervant in queſt of you.

"As

"As Gulrouz was not leſs eager for that interview, we complied with their mutual wiſhes: but oh! fatal compliance which was to fill the meaſure of my puniſhment.

"No ſooner Gulrouz ſaw placed by her ſide the man ſhe had ſo paſſionately loved, pale, and yet bloody; than, ſhe raiſed her ſupplicating eyes to heaven, and after fixed them upon him with a dumb expreſſion of grief and remorſe, the eloquence of which could have moved the very trees that encloſed us. Morad, ſtruck by it, cried; O accuſe not thyſelf of our misfortune, my beloved Gulrouz; it is my heart which is guilty of them for having

having ſo obſtinately rebelled againſt its firſt ſovereign; but accept my repentance, and receive my faith in this embrace. As in ſaying this, he endeavoured to approach her nearer, ſhe ſprung into his arms; he preſſed her to his boſom, on which, bending her head, ſhe expired.

"In that inſtant, her wound having opened, I was drenched in a ſtream of the reproaching blood which I had barbarouſly drawn. In that inſtant the horror and confuſion which will attend the diſſolution of nature ſeized my diſtracted mind. I flew from the arbour, roaring through the wood like a lioneſs who had loſt her whelp, and tearing up the trees that oppoſed my paſſage

"My

"My phrenzy laſted till my ſpirits were exhauſted, but it was ſoon renewed, when meeting two of my former ſlaves, they told me that Zoroaſter and his infamous crew were carrying on their camels the corſe of Gulrouz, with Morad and Saphira.

"I believed them not, and would have puniſhed them for this aggravation to my grief, if they had not eſcaped my rage by flight. At that ſame inſtant, a venerable old man appeared before me, and ſaid;

"Recall thy faithful ſlaves, and return to thy arbour, there thou ſhalt find

a man

a man as unhappy as thyself, ask him to conduct thee to the Sage Locman, and both of you will recover your peace.

"I obeyed this injunction; and my slaves, whose affection for me had kept them but at a short distance, hesitated not to follow me. I found you, knew you, and recalled you from the gates of death; but at your angry looks and words, I relapsed into my madness, the cure of which I cannot expect but in fulfilling the command I have received.

"When Assar had ended his dismal narration, I paused some time before I answered him. At last, having considered, that

that often the words of thoſe, who are deprived of reaſon, are immediate inſpirations of the divinity; and being not without hope that the apparition, which Aſſar mentioned, might be a token of Loeman's protection, I took the reſolution of conducting him to Yemen.

But what a difference did I find between ſo melancholy a journey and the happy one I had expected in the company of Morad and Saphira. Inſtead of the delightful communication of love and friendſhip, I was daily expoſed to the frantic ſtarts of a man for whom humanity alone intereſted me; inſtead of the inraptured hopes of approaching felicity,

my

my heart was harrowed with cares, fears, and grief. However, I confeſſed that I deſerved theſe ſufferings, for having neglected my friend when I was in the intoxicating hours of love.

"Thus I arrived in Yemen, with a body emaciated by fatigue, but with a mind comforted by reſignation.

"Locman received me with his uſual kindneſs; and heard, with a compaſſionate benevolence, the tale of my woe; but he delayed the conſolations I expected till after the approaching trial of the Labyrinth, to which I was admitted

with Aſſar, who had been reſtored by the Sage to the uſe of his reaſon.

"Here the impoſſibility of deſcription obliges me to draw the veil of ſilence over what followed, which I cannot expreſs better than by telling you, that in the grove of truth I found Saphira, Morad, and Gulrouz.

"Locman pleaſed with the flowers of our baſkets, fixed our fate on the bands of happineſs; he united Morad to the generous Gulrouz, and made me poſſeſſor of the amiable Saphira. He loaded us, with the gifts of munificence; among which,

which, were a ſumptuous palace in the city of Aden, and this pleaſing retreat.

"We inhabited alternately in both theſe places; and there often heightened our felicity by the remembrance of our paſt troubles.

"Morad recounted to me how after being forced from the arbour, he had met Firouzkah attended by a numerous retinue, and had been reſcued by him from the hand of Zoroaſter. How that worthy confident of the Sage had followed my ſteps; obſerved my actions in Turan, and diſcovered the dark plot of the Queen; how having judged that

Gulrouz was only in a lethargick ſwoon, he had reſtored her to life; how, in ſhort, he had ordered Aſſar to return to his cell, and to aſk me to conduct him to Yemen; in order that by ſo painful a talk, I might expiate my remiſneſs in the office of friendſhip. Gulrouz, in her turn, told us; how being unwilling that any body ſhould ſuffer by her fault, ſhe aſked the pardon of Maana; and how having obtained it, and knowing not the connexions of her brother with Zoroaſter, ſhe diſcovered to him, with an unlimited confidence, the ſecret contrivances of the caſtle of which he made ſo ſhocking an uſe.

"And what became of the miſerable Aſſar? ſaid Zerir."

"The Sage, anſwered Saheb, inſtead of permitting him to return to his ſolitude, provided againſt his dangerous melancholy, in ordaining that he ſhould receive the perſons who deſerve a particular favour in their admittance to the labyrinth; and you have ſeen yourſelf how well he diſcharges his truſt."

"Ha! exclaimed the prince, the reſpectable hoſt of the Caravanſerai, in which we repoſed after our fatigue in the foreſt, is, then, that Aſſar whoſe inclinations were liable to ſo much perverſity! and

thus a ſkilful hand can give a ſalutary virtue to a baleful plant! But where is Morad? he, whoſe excellencies were the growth of nature; I long to ſee the deſerving friend of Saheb.

"Ten times, replied Saheb, the vernal warmth has revived the earth, ſince the froſty ſnow of abſence has covered the ſoil of friendſhip, which, however, will ſoon be melted by the beams of reunion: Morad was ſent by Locman to Afraſiab, in order to fill the place of his deceaſed Vizir; and the ſlave of Locman has brought me orders to haſten my intended journey to Turan.

"Let us then depart, immediately, cried Zerir; every moment that we neglect the call of duty, may coſt us an age of trouble and ſorrow. The furious waves of my paſſion for Periſadeh have ſubſided on the ocean of my thoughts, which now is agitated only by the gale of emulation for your virtue."

As Saheb had before prepared himſelf to leave Yemen; and bidden adieu to his family, who remained in his palace of Aden; Zerir was left not long on the rack of impatience. They ſet out after a few days with the cheerfulneſs that a good intention inſpires; and at the head

of a little caravan well ſtored with every conveniency for travelling.

In their way to the green ſea, the prince having made repeated, but vain, enquiries after Kiſhtaſb, many doubts aroſe in his mind; and he ſaid to Saheb:

"Surely the robbers have deceived my beloved brother, as we cannot find their tracks any where upon this road; and as there is ſo little probability of their ſtraying as far as Herat. Oh! perhaps, when I am led forward by a deluding hope, I leave behind my dear Kiſhtaſb in the depth of deſpair!

"I can-

"I cannot blame your anxiety, replied Saheb; but in order, in some measure, to relieve you, know, prince, that these wanderers in the path of mischief march in bands partly composed of the inhabitants of Dagheſtan and Shirvan, and partly of thoſe of Hejaz and Hajar. *

"From the reſemblance of their rough native places, they have contracted a ſimilar ferocity, which regardleſs of diſtance, has united them into an odious confederacy againſt the reſt of mankind. But, though they are perpetually ravaging for prey the fineſt countries of

* The deſert, and the ſtony parts of Arabia.

Aſia; though often they barbarouſly uſe thoſe who having fallen into their hands are not able to feed their avarice, they faithfully keep their promiſe to their captives. They, alſo, ſcrupulouſly divide their ill-gotten booty with their countrymen, whom they exactly viſit at ſettled times. They may, therefore, while upon a journey to Dagheſtan, repair to Herat; where they have, as well as in every other great city, ſome truſty agents: for they carry on their criminal trade with the utmoſt regularity.

"And can the laws connive at ſuch enormities, cried Zerir! can the good and great Lohorab ſuffer it! he at whoſe

name

name ſo many nations tremble, whoſe throne ſhadows half the world! Why does he not draw the avenging ſword againſt theſe rapacious wolves, and againſt the covetous dogs who betray his empire, which they ought to guard, and whoſe avarice prompts them, ſecretly to coincide with thoſe plunderers?

"Though the ſovereign of brightneſs, returned Saheb, in order to ſurvey all our globe, perpetually travels around it, and as he alights at every one of his twelve manſions, there diſpenſes a due proportion of light to each ſeaſon; yet, many corners of the earth never have been penetrated by his enlivening rays.

And can a man, who in whatever ſtation he may be exalted has but a limited ſight, explore with the torch of juſtice the gloomy haunts of malice and fraud? No; for, the more the proſpect extends before him, the more the objects preſent a perplexed view; and thus, when with the piercing eyes of ambition he endeavours to obſerve every point of the hemiſphere; he ſees not the vile mole that digs its dark recefs at his feet, and undermines his ſeat of glory.

"O ſaid Zerir, I apprehend ſo well the misfortune or happineſs which attends a King, according to the choice of the man whom he entruſts with his

power

power, and the diſpenſation of it; that, to have a good Vizir has been my wiſh in the palace of Lochman; and I ſhould think it granted, if Saheb would be that invaluable friend, in caſe I mount the throne of Kharezm to which my father has deſtined me. Then I could be ſure that my ſubjects would not be robbed of their liberty or property by bold villains, nor enticed to ſuperſtition by baſe hypocrites.

"Your prepoſſeſſion in my favour overvalues my abilities, anſwered Saheb. However, as an unworthy croud inceſſantly preſſes to aſcend the ſhining, though rifted mountain of grandeurs, in

order

order to crush every one beneath; a well-intentioned man ought not to avoid an exalted ſtation, becauſe he deſpiſes its falſe glittering, and knows its real dangers; for he, who refuſes to ſacrifice his own quiet to the advantage of ſociety, deſerves not its protection.

"Yet, the beſt government may miſs its aim, not only in the hands of a good Vizir, but even in thoſe of the moſt excellent King, when his dominions are too extenſive: for, if a prince is contemned for his remiſſneſs when he ſuffers the encroachments of a confined neighbour; on the other hand, he makes his people grow mutinous, and ungovern-

able

able, when, by repeated victories, he intoxicates them with the dangerous wine of flattery.

"Happy then is the ſovereign whoſe dominions are ſo narrowly bounded as not to make it neceſſary for vigilance to guard immenſe tracts of land, inſtead of protecting the individuals committed to its care; who, like the father of a large family, ſees his numerous children ſurrounding the ſeat of his authority which love and reverence ſupport.

"As his ſubjects are thus, as it were, under his eye, he finds many opportunities of ſecuring their affections, from which

which he draws the treasure of his felicity, without any fears for these inexhaustible mines of real riches, the value of which is too little known to be envied; and consequently cannot arm greedy avarice with the sword of violence, nor interested imposture with the poison of deceit.

"Such a desirable condition may be your lot, O prince! if you reign in the fertile, but now confined kingdom of Kharezm; and could I refuse to see your sacred and beloved head crowned with these blessings? O should I not pride in preserving them to you?"

Zerir

Zerir was so delighted with his amiable companion, that he felt not the fatigue of the journey, and minded its progress only because he dreaded the day of separation; while Saheb, no less pleased at the eagerness with which the young prince received the words of instruction, recollected not the necessity of that fatal moment without the same reluctance.

In these dispositions, they had already reached the border of the desert of Noubendigan, when the prospect of a beautiful valley drew their attention. They hastened to the enchanting place, in order to enjoy from its source the fragancy that

that the evening breezes were ſpreading around; and the tents being pitched amidſt innumerable cluſters of ripe fruits and blooming flowers, they ſeated themſelves at the table of mirth.

While the ſparkling wine of Shiraz was moderated by the diſcourſes of wiſdom; they were interrupted by a voice repeating many times, *Periſadeh loves Zerir.*

At theſe pleaſing unexpected words, the prince ſtarted from his ſeat; and running to the tree on which he perceived the welcome prattler, he endeavoured to catch him; but the affrighted bird having

ing exclaimed, *I go to Perisadeh*, flew from tree to tree, still pursued by Zerir, who in his transport of joy and hope, shut his eyes on the dangers of the approaching night, and his ears to the entreaties of his friend.

Saheb for a while close followed the prince, but the distance between them lengthening, he soon found that the zeal of mature years cannot keep pace with the winged rashness of youth.

At length, he remained breathless on the thorns of anxieties; yet, still in hope that some of his slaves would better succeed than himself; but they answered not

his

his expectation; for being miſled by the obſcurity, they continued to wander in the valley long after the prince had entered the deſert.

In the mean time, Zerin, like the bounding antelope, overleaped the buſhes and thickets that oppoſed his paſſage, being directed by the voice of the bird; and ſtopped not his courſe, till his enticing guide having remained ſilent, he judged him to be aſleep upon ſome branches.

When with an impatient eye he watched the returning light, his ear was ſtruck by theſe words:

"O

"O impudent, and unnatural Giamasb! canst thou forsake me thus? Is the usurper of thy rights dearer to thee than thy brother?---Why hast thou not left Kilmtasb in the hands of the robbers?---and so leave me in the pangs of an untimely death, which thy ill-placed goodness has brought upon me,---this---this is a most odious and unheard-of barbarity."

At these incoherent exclamations, which were followed by deep groans; Zerir sprung forward to the place whence the dismal sounds proceeded; and by the rising dawn, saw the unfortunate Cobad in the arms of two slaves, who

endeavoured

endeavoured in vain to ſtop the effuſion of his blood.

His generous heart, forgetting all paſt injuries, melted at the mournful ſight; he kneeled down by the dying Cobad, who raiſing his eyes upon him, ſaid:

"Behold, prince, the ſon of the glorious Kaikhoſru, who inſtead of being ſeated on one of the many thrones his father has conquered, is now ſtretched upon the duſt, deſtitute of every human help, and doomed to reſign his life in a gloomy deſert: from this, learn the uſeful leſſon, that none is freed from the blows of inconſtant fortune.----I have received

ceived theſe wounds in endeavouring to reſcue Kiſhtaſb from the hands of the robbers, whom my brother ſtill purſues.--- Let then gratitude, as well as honour and ſelf-intereſt grant me a decent grave;---let not my corſe be the prey of wild beaſts;---and may heaven permit that in ſuch a condition as this, you find even an enemy to perform the ſame office towards you!"

After theſe ambiguous words, Gobad ſpoke no more; and, with reſentment and deſpair in his looks, expired.

Zerir having given ſome ſincere tears to his unhappy fate, turned to the ſlaves, and

and presenting them with costly jewels, said:

"Take this; convey the body of your master to the next city, and there give him a burial suitable to his rank."

At that command, the trembling slaves prostrated themselves at his feet, saying:

"What have we done to offend my Lord, that he will send us to a certain and cruel death? Oh! surely we shall be immediately taken for the murderers of the prince; and by horrible tortures forced to exchange the unbelieved truth into

into a falſe accuſation againſt our ſelves."

On this expoſtulation, Zerir pauſed ſome moments, revolving in his thoughts how he could ſatisfy his love for his brother, and at the ſame time comply with the requeſt of Cobad.

When thus his mind was agitated as a torrent ſtopped in its courſe; he ſpied two ſervants of Saheb running towards him, and haſtening to them, he cried:

"O welcome, thrice welcome, my friends; for ſurely providence has ſent you here in this critical inſtant. Return

to my beloved Saheb; tell him, that I entreat his forgiveneſs for the apparent ingratitude and the real inconſideration of my conduct, tell him, that I beg his protection for theſe ſlaves whom I have charged to pay the laſt duty to my couſin Cobad: Oh! tell him, that this prince has been ſlain in endeavouring to deliver my brother, who, is now in the utmoſt danger; and on whoſe footſteps I fly, in order to ſave or revenge him."

In ending theſe words, he mounted the horſe of Cobad, and diſappeared from the ſight of the ſervants and the ſlaves, who having put the corſe on one of their horſes, rejoined Saheb.

When

When this excellent man had anſwered the truſt that Zerir was repoſing in him, he aſked for the road he had taken; but on hearing that he had not even given time to the ſlaves for telling him in what place they had found the robbers, he wondered at his impetuouſneſs, and with a friendly heart bemoaning the misfortune, with which ſuch a temper threatened him, he purſued his journey.

Zerir was not aware of his fault, till exhauſted with fatigue, he aſked himſelf to what purpoſe he thus wandered through the deſert. Then perceiving ſome ſcattered huts on a bye road, he directed his courſe that way.

But, the all seeing Power, who distinguishes the frailty of human nature from its perversity, had conducted the steps of the good, though too hasty prince, to the very spot on which the robbers had fought against Giamasb and Cobad.

As he alighted, he found the inhabitants of the little hamlet, surrounding a man, who, though sordly wounded, refused to surrender, and threatned destruction on them all; when hearing he was one of the robbers, he flew at him, and with the edge of his scymitar loped off his audacious arm; after which, commanding him to say where was Kishtasb, the enraged robber answered:

"If you mean the deceitful prince of Iran, who was bringing us to punishment, inſtead of reward for the grant of his life; I hope by this time his malice and power are at an end; for the ſtranger, whoſe imprudence in acknowledging him, has been ſo happy for us, is too weak to have long withheld the daggers pointed at his heart."

The fury of Zerir, at theſe words, cannot be expreſſed. With another blow of his formidable weapon he ſevered the head of the robber from his body: but overpowered by grief, he ſoon remained himſelf, as one ſtricken by death;

whilſt horror and deſpair were painted on his face.

Though his looks conveyed terror to the hearts of the beholders, one of the peaſants approaching him, ſaid:

"Be comforted, my lord; and conſider that the words of the wicked are not to be truſted, eſpecially when anger loads them with the poiſon of malice. Perhaps, it would have been prudent to ſooth the robber inſtead of exaſperating him:—However, let not deſpondence invade your mind. My grief for the misfortune of my prince has not been idle; I have ordered my ſon to follow at a diſ-

a diſtance the odious band; and if you will accept ſome refreſhments in my cottage, at his return, you ſhall know better what courſe to take."

Zerir graſped at this ſhadow of hope; and followed the peaſant, whoſe ſon, not long after, brought intelligence, that the robbers continued their journey by the road of Dagheſtan; that they had forced Giamaſb to deſiſt from purſuing them, but ſtill preſerved the life of Kiſhtaſb.

The loyal cottagers having offered to attend Zerir; he choſe, among their youths, twenty of the fitteſt to bear arms,

and departed; guided by them through the intricate parts of the desert.

For a while the common reports confirmed him, that he was in the true path of his pursuit; but at last, he heard that the wandering band had turned their steps towards Kharezm.

These were very happy tidings in his situation, for the people of Kharezm being particularly attached to their sovereigns, he was sure to find there every arm ready to assist him; but the series of disappointments he was to meet with, were not yet at an end. On the frontiers of that beautiful country he was told,

told, that the cautious plunderers obſerving that the Kharizmians viewed them with the eyes of ſuſpicion, had ſeparated in little troops, and before they could be ſecured by force, got to the narrow paſſes, which through the mountains, conducted to Dagheſtan.

Zerir, who was not willing to be known till he had rejoined, or fully revenged his brother; contented himſelf to declare the danger of the prince Kiſhtaſh, and the reſolution he was in to fly to his reſcue; on which he raiſed a little army of ſelect warriors; and with them began to ravage Dagheſtan, putting to the ſword

every one of its inhabitants whom fate threw in his way.

As ferocity is very far from being true courage, the Dagheſtanians, ſo bold in aſſaulting unwary and unarmed confidence, turned precipitantly from the face of valour; and retired to their rugged rocks, whither Zerir followed them; and notwithſtanding the advantage of their ſituation, drove them to the furtheſt haunts of Shirvan.

Though the governors of Khareſm, and of the adjacent countries knew not Zerir, they could not but join with him for the deliverance of their prince; and

were

were ſecretly rejoiced that the raſhneſs of the young adventurer had taken from them the painful taſk of ſo dangerous an expedition.

However, as no tidings of Kiſhtaſb were to be got any where, during a whole year, Zerir marked every day by ſome atchievements worthy of a far more illuſtrious ſeat than the retreats of banditti; and the obſtacles he met with, like water upon a raging fire, inſtead of quenching the ardour of his courage, enflamed his reſolution of exterminating the two criminal nations who thus infeſted Aſia; unleſs they ſhould humbly reſtore the liberty of Kiſhtaſb, and pro-

mise to restrain themselves within the bounds of society.

But his design not being registered in the book of fate, was overturned by an unforeseen event.

As he was in the mountains of Shirvan, he heard that an innumerable army of Turanians had passed the Gihon, and threatened Khorasan with a total ruin by their sudden invasion. He wondered at that piece of news, for by the narration of Saheb, he had such an opinion of Afrasiab, that he could not suspect him of injustice; and much less could his ve-

neration

neration for the virtues of Zohoraſb, admit any thoughts of that kind.

The unexperienced prince knew not how often kings are drawn into unjuſt wars by the deluſive repreſentation of ſuppoſed wrongs; how often private malice or covetouſneſs finds means to raiſe to their throne the voice of the blindly-furious multitude; and forces them to expoſe themſelves to the ſhame of defeats, or to the bluſhes of ill gotten ſucceſs and overpaid victories. However, Afraſiab was no more expoſed to theſe dangers, death had removed him to the regions of eternal peace; and Argiaſb, who had ſucceeded to his throne, inherited

rited not his virtues. The perplexity of Zerir on the cauſe of the preſent war, laſted not long; for the governor of Kharezm having joined his little army, and with obſequiouſneſs demanded immediate admittance, ſpoke to him thus:

"The mighty Lohoraſb, ſovereign of the world, has been pleaſed to put in the mouth of his unworthy ſlave, theſe his ſacred words.

"I had two ſons, who bloomed in the garden of hope, and by the fragrance of their virtues, kept my heart from withering under the preſſure of time. The life

life of one of them has been miſerably cropped by the ſythe of wickedneſs; and if I find not the other, in the celebrated warrior who pretends to preclude fame from ſtamping his name in her liſt of eternal renown; where ſhall I ſeek for my Zerir? But, if my preſaging mind deceives me not; haſten, O thou my only remaining comfort; haſten, by thy preſence to reſtore to my aged nerves their wonted ſtrength; haſten, to defend the throne on which thou art ſoon to be placed.

"Let me oppoſe thee to a young hero by whom the army of Argiaſb is commanded; thou ſhalt find in him an adverſary

verſary worthy of thee; for by his valor and accompliſhments he has deſerved the hand of the princeſs of Turan, and with it the right of ſucceſſion to that empire.

"I have taken arms only in my own defence, and juſtice is on my ſide: for the generous Giamaſb, at the head of a reſolute troop, having overtaken the deteſtable murderers of Kiſhtaſb on the Turanians dominions, and having puniſhed ſome of them, notwithſtanding the baſe protection granted to their atrocity, ſuch an equitable action has been deemed an unwarrantable hoſtility; and has looſed the reins of inveterate hatred.

"May

"May heaven protect my beloved Zerir, and ſtrengthen the wings of his duty, that he may arrive in time to the aſſiſtance of his father, his King, and his country."

At this moving and forcible addreſs, Zerir bowed his forehead to the ground in ſign of reſpect and obedience; then riſing in a frantic deſpair, he curſed his paſt follies, for having coſt the life of his brother, whoſe untimely death he vowed to revenge upon his own guilty heart, after having overwhelmed in a ſea of blood the whole empire of Turan, and erected a pyramid of human ſculls on the very

very ſpot in which he ſhould find Kiſhtaſb to have been murdered.

His rage, which ſubſided not in all the courſe of his journey to Herat, was ſcarcely ſuſpended by filial love when in the arms of his tender parents; and his eyes clouded with deſpair, brightened only at the reflexion of burniſhed arms, when he arrived on the field of glory.

The two armies had been long in ſight of each other; for the Turanians, immediately after their paſſage over the Gihon, had retrenched themſelves near the bank of that river; and though far ſuperiors in number to their enemy, had ſuffered the ruſt

ruſt of inaction to fully their ſhining armour. But, when the hoſtile ſpears of Zerir joined thoſe of Khoraſan, and the united warriors of Iran by loud acclamations rent the ſky with the name of their beloved prince, the lions of Turan were rouzed from their den, and like that noble animal, who deſpiſes a weak adverſary, and ruſhes upon his equal in ſtrength, they ſeemed eager to encounter the tyger of war.

Zerir ſaw the army of his abhorred foe moving forward with a heart bounding as his fiery ſteed; and having put his troops in array, he rode up to the front of the foremoſt

foremoſt rank, in order to lead them to the wiſhed-for danger.

In that inſtant, a Turanian Herald, advancing with majeſtic ſtep, cried:

"Let not the blood of thouſands and thouſands be the price of peace, O Iranians! for our general offers to decide this quarrel with your prince. Let the party whoſe champion ſhall be vanquiſhed, receive the law from the victor; and let a ſolemn oath inſure this condition."

"I accept the challenge," anſwered Zerir; "and if your prince thirſt for taſting, before any other, the bitter draught

of

of my fury, let him come forth immediately, for the cup of my heart is full to the brim; but, though I conſent to confer upon him the honour of being the firſt victim ſent to Kiſhtaſb; here I ſwear, that the only mercy I intend to ſhew to the baſe Turanians is immediate death.

"Theſe threats are not to be feared, replied the Herald, for the ſpear of my general ſhall ſufficiently cool the rage which boils in your blood."

So ſaying, he withdrew.

The

The impatient Zerir waited not long for his provoked adverſary, who, clad in refulgent armour, and mounted on a fire breathing ſteed, now ſallied out.

At his ſtately appearance, Zerir, enflamed with the emulation of glory as well as with the fire of revenge, gave rein to his impetuous horſe, and had almoſt joined him in the midſt of the field of battle, when perceiving that this ſeemingly undaunted warrior was making ſigns for a parley; he cried with indignation:

"Words

"Words are the weapons of women, and thoſe of death only are proper on this occaſion; either call back Kiſhtaſh from the dead, and reſtore him to my arms, or join him there, and appeaſe his angry ſhade."

In ſaying this, he ſtretched forth his beaming ſpear, and ruſhed on with ſuch violence, that the Turanian hero, who was juſt then raiſing up the beaver of his helmet, had only time to oppoſe the blow with his ſhield; but was unhorſed by the mighty ſhock, and extended on the duſt.

While

While the two armies filled the air with confuſed ſounds of joy and deſpair, Zeiir quickly diſmounting, drew his ſcymitar, in order to ſever the head of his adverſary from his body; when lo! in the diſcovered face of that devoted victim, he beheld the features of his beloved Kiſhtaſb.

As in his amazement, terror, joy, and confuſion, he ſtood immoveable; Kiſhtaſb recovered himſelf; and with the gentle ſmile of friendſhip, ſaid:

"Let not the conflict of your ſentiments overpower your reaſon, my deareſt brother; forbear giving me any teſtimonies

monies of your love in this critical moment; my overthrow has ſufficiently proved it; but as your kind fury, better than my cool prepared ſcheme, will effect my deſigns, let prudence gather the fruit, which a pious raſhneſs has ripened. Preſent me the hand of mercy, while the eyes of attention are fixed upon us; and lead me priſoner to my revered father, who, I hope, will grant me his forgiveneſs for thus appearing in arms againſt him, when, at his feet, I ſhall unravel the web of my good intentions."

Zerir, in a ſilent extaſy, obeyed theſe injunctions, and Kiſhtaſb, letting down his viſer, followed his dear conqueror.

The Iranians had been at too great a diſtance from the place of the fight to diſtinguiſh the features of their prince; and as they viewed him as a foe when he paſſed through their ranks, they ceaſed not to extol both the generoſity and the valour of Zerir.

Lohoraſb had remained in the camp with his old general Guderz, a mighty warrior, whoſe fame yet filled with wonders every nation of Aſia; who bent under the weight of age, and unable to lift up a ſpear, found ſtill a pleaſant melody in the clang of arms. This hero was the deareſt friend of his ſovereign; and as the moſt ſtrict equity had always checked

checked and directed his martial inclinations, he was alſo the fitteſt counſellor to a juſt and peaceful King.

No ſooner Zerir, who had been preceeded by the ſhouts of victory, entered the royal tent, that Lohoraſb opened his arms to receive him, but the enraptured prince, whoſe paſſionate ſoul could contain no longer its tranſports, ſeeing Kiſhtaſb proſtrate himſelf before the awful throne, kneeled down by him, and having haſtily unbuckled his helmet, fell upon his neck in a tranſe of too long ſuppreſſed joy.

At the unexpected and moving ſight, Lohoraſb could hardly reſtrain the impulſes of nature, to which the brotherly tenderneſs of Zerir ſeemed to add ſtrength; but he was king as well as father, and finding his recovered ſon in arms againſt himſelf and his country, juſtice counterbalanced the power of paternal love always eager to forgive. He then remained ſilent till Kiſhtaſb, who ſaw the painful ſtruggle on his clouded brow, raiſing the eyes of ſupplication, ſaid:

"Let not, my lord, let not the appearance condemn me: I can prove my innocence, not only to an indulging parent,

rent, but even to a dreaded ſovereign. Be pleaſed to order your army to make not any hoſtile motions againſt mine, whoſe chiefs, bound by the moſt ſolemn oath, will wait their doom from your lips, if not forced by the firſt of duties, a juſt defence; and leaſt the ſound of my true name ſhould reach their ears, command ſecrecy to your attendants, till I have explained the neceſſity of this precaution, in removing the black veil which conceals the candour of my conduct.

" Riſe, my ſon, anſwered Lohoraſb; your father has already abſolved you, and your king will attentively liſten to your words with the ſentiments that ought to

animate every judge, the hope of finding no room for cenſure."

On this, the deſired injunction being ſent to the troops, and every one, but the two princes and Guderz, having retired from the royal preſence, Kiſhtaſb began to relate the misfortune which ſeparated him from Zerir, painting with the moſt lively colours his anxiety on the account of that dear brother, till he met Saheb; and purſued his narration in theſe words:

"The conſenting look with which the benevolent ſtranger anſwered my requeſt, reanimated my ſoul. When I could hope

hope for a life dearer to me than my own, I fixed the eyes of fortitude upon my unhappy fate. I chearfully promiſed the robbers the large ranſom they had expected from my appearance, and telling them that I had many correſpondents at Herat, I confirmed them in the intention of conducting me to that city. I was now in a ſituation well ſuited to the full exertion of my reaſon and judgment; for, as every accidental evil has its appropriated good; ſlavery diſburthens the mind of thoſe claſhing deſires which perpetually ſpring from liberty; and making reſignation a neceſſity, opens the field of calmneſs to our mental faculties.

"The firſt object of my attention was the moſt ſurprizing conduct of the robbers. We never travelled but by unfrequented paths, and ſeldom ſtationed but in ſome remoteſt caverns; however we always found in thoſe places, ſeemingly ſo horrid, every accommodation we could deſire.

"Their confederates, who, at different intervals inhabited theſe haunts upon our ſtrange road, received them as expected friends; abundantly providing for their wants till their next ſtage; while at each river we were obliged to paſs, we found boats waiting for us; and on a deſerted

deſerted ſhore of the Green Sea a ſhip ready to ſail at our arrival.

" Theſe ſtriking inſtances of the good effect of order, made a deep impreſſion upon my mind; how well, ſaid I to my ſelf, would uſeful and allowed deſigns ſucceed thus regulated, if by it illegitimate attempts are ſo wonderfully carried on! Ought a laudable undertaking to neglect a foreſight, and a conſtancy which are almoſt an excuſe for crime?

" I no leſs admired the concord that reigned among the robbers; and I aſcribed it to their having not, in reſpect

to themſelves, the two powerful ſprings of contention, ambition, and intereſt.

"They commanded by turns; and their captures were put into the common fund, which partition was made with the ſtricteſt juſtice. In ſhort I began to think that I might find a worſe ſociety, even in the politeſt courts.

"It ſeldom happens that the offender harden his heart againſt the reconciling looks of the offended, except when private malice or perſonal reſentment has dictated the injury. Therefore the cloudy countenance of the robbers began to clear up at the ſerenity of my own; they even appealed

appealed to my equity for the *right of the ſtrongeſt* which they claimed, and I could not help finding ſome ſpecious reaſons in their arguments; in ſuppoſing that *right* to have any allowable ground among mankind.

"Inſenſibly, my ſavage tyrants were ſoftened; they made my chains eaſier, and alleviated their remaining weight by all the kind offices they could think of; not only reſolving to truſt to my honour for the affair we were to tranſact at Herat, but even conſenting, on the faith of my large promiſes, to leave off plundering till our arrival there.

"We

"We were in this good intelligence together, when near the border of the defert we met Ciamaſb. This prince, tranſported with indignation at the condition he ſaw me in, gave reins to the ſteed of imprudence; and ruſhing among the robbers, exclaimed:

"Deliver inſtantly the prince of Iran, inſolent plunderers; and proſtrate yourſelves at his feet to implore his forgiveneſs for your attempt againſt his ſacred perſon.

"At theſe words, the robbers ſtopped: amazement and anger were dreadfully blended in their looks, which returned

turned to their usual ferocity: whilst their chief, coldly advancing towards Giamasb, said:

"A man in chains cannot be called a prince; for that appellation implies power; and as we respect not these unsupported titles; your pretended prince of Iran shall feel the just wrath of his, now real lords, for the treachery he designed against them. As to you, young man, whose indiscretion has probably saved our lives, receive the grant of yours as a reward for that benefit though it was not intended as such; retire, and tempt our patience no further; for surely your madness is not such as to contend against

againſt us with your unexperienced arm, and your weak retinue.

"To this ſpeech, the generous Giamaſb anſwered with his ſcymitar; and regardleſs of my prayers, engaged a moſt unequal fight; from whence ſome of the robbers dragged me.

"Soon after, we were followed by the reſt of the band, who boaſted of the havock they had made among my friends; without, however, taking any reſolution in regard to me, as they were intent only in haſtening their march, being ſtill purſued by Giamaſb who raiſed againſt them all the cottagers he met.

"When

"When at laſt they forced the prince to deſiſt, they halted; and ſurrounding me with their ſcymitars drawn, raiſed the clamours of reproach againſt my deceit and the ſuppoſed perfidiouſneſs of my promiſe; aſking me, at laſt, what I had to ſay in my own defence; to which I anſwered:

"I know, my friends, that the diſſimulation to which the pride of my rank has forced me, now debaſes me ſo, as not to be credited in the profeſſion of my good intentions in your behalf; but, why ſhould my fault fall upon you, who have acted with ſo much candour and kindneſs towards me? Yes; conſider,

that

that if your reſentment were even as juſt as you imagine it to be, you cannot attempt my life without gathering upon your own heads the ſtorm of revenge, by which your whole race will be ſwept away from the face of the earth. The warrior, whoſe warm zeal for me has been ſo manifeſtly proved, ſoon will enter your country with millions of my father's ſubjects; and pour the fire of deſolation to the center of your rocks. I alone can avert your impending fate, and exchange into gold the weight of iron which would cruſh you: reflect that now to truſt me is no more an act of generous confidence; but one of neceſſity.

"While

"While I ſpoke thus, I obſerved the effect of my words upon the artleſs face of the robbers; I ſaw many of them contemptuouſly ſmiling at the dangers I anounced; but on every one was painted a returning, though now anxious hope, when I touched the tuneful ſtring of their favourite paſſion.

"The firſt heat of their reſentment being thus abated, they retired in order to hold their private council; the reſolutions of which I ſuppoſed to be favourable to me, from the continuation of their humane behaviour. But the fang of ſuſpicion began to gnaw my heart when, after having ſeparated in little bands on the

the frontier of Kharezm, they rejoined together on that ſide of the Gihon which belongs to the kingdom of Turan.

" It was there, that their chief addreſſed me thus:

" Though the inacceſſible rocks, and unfathomable caverns of our country would ſecure us againſt hoſtile attempts, and conſequently againſt daunting fear; we have taken into conſideration the repreſentations you made us. We juſtly apprehend that even the utmoſt candour and ſincerity of a man cannot inſure the execution of a promiſe which depends on others; and doubt not that your friends will

will not fufil yours as long as they can aim at our deſtruction.

"On this, we have brought you amidſt your irreconcilable enemies, who are actually in open rebellion againſt their king, becauſe he refuſes to break the peace with your country. If we deliver you into their hands, kingdoms and kingdoms will be thought hardly ſufficient to redeem you, whilſt a much leſs conſiderable ranſom will content us. There are two of our warriors, who conſent to expoſe themſelves for the common intereſt, and wait your orders to depart for Iran. If they come back with the gold we have a right to demand, you ſhall be

free,

free, and we will insure your repassing the river, and returning into your father's dominions. If, on the contrary, we are deceived in our expectation, we will seek our advantage at the price of your liberty, whatever may be the consequence. Mean while your life shall answer for the lives of our two generous friends.

"I eagerly accepted this proposition, with all the conditions and hazards annexed to it; and even doubled the sum which the robbers asked for my ransom. My readiness and liberality entirely reconciled me with them, and as the departure of their companions was fixed to

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the next riſing of the ſun, they prepared themſelves for paſſing the night in the cheerful mirth of rekindled confidence.

" As theſe ſtrange adventurers exerciſed no violence in the empire of Turan, where they always found a ſure aſylum, they were no more obliged to tread the lonely paths of caution; a large tent was therefore pitched on the very ſhore where we arrived; and the tables of a genuine abundance ſpread around.

" At the height of their ruſtick, but cordial gaiety, a venerable old man, followed only by two ſlaves, intreated for admittance and hoſpitality. His requeſt being

being immediately granted, he approached us with ſlow ſteps and thankful looks, when, having fixed his eyes upon me, he ſtarted back, exclaiming:

"O heaven! is this not a deluſive appearance! can the prince of Iran be really bound by ſhameful chains!

"Theſe words threw the robbers into the utmoſt confuſion. As they had reſolved to keep exactly our laſt convention, they were afraid that the preſent diſcovery ſhould force them to break it. They haſtily conſulted amongſt themſelves; and turning to the ſtranger, ſaid:

"If

"If we were not witheld by what we owe to an accepted gueſt, we would at once ſnatch our ſecret from the talons of indiſcretion; but at leaſt we muſt ſecure it for the ſake of our captive, whoſe right is the moſt ſacred as he has already eaten with us the ſalt of friendſhip. Reſolve then, O Turanian! to remain willingly with us till the ranſom of Kiſhtaſb is paid, and he return to his country; for the leaſt ſtruggle you ſhould make againſt this our juſt reſolution, would, in breaking aſunder the tye of regard, abſolve us of your immediate death.

"How much do I praiſe your fidelity to your promiſe, my brave friends, anſwered

answered the stranger; and you, my prince, remove their laudable, but needless distrust; you can vouch for the faith of the late governor of Kharezm, under whose roof you were born, and who has so often blessed the early hope of your promising infancy intrusted to his care.

"Yes, cried I, you are my much loved Azim, my second father: years of separation cannot erase from the memory him whom gratitude has engraved in the heart.

"In saying this, I tenderly embraced Azim, whom the robbers respectfully placed

placed among them, with preſſing entreaties of partaking their entertainment; whilſt I acquainted him of their impending deſign on my account.

"Azim readily accepted their invitation; telling them that his uneaſineſs at being benighted too far from his habitation, was now changed in thanks to his propitious ſtar for having conducted him to their tent: for added he; you will ſurely not envy me the happineſs of redeeming my beloved prince. Let, then, my faithful ſlaves fly with the morning gales, to the garden of my treaſure, and they ſoon will come back with the fragrance of riches for you, and of liberty

for Kiſhtaſb. As I will even add to the ſum you expected from the King of Iran, you cannot but remain contented; without expoſing your companions to dangers for which it would be moſt unjuſt to make the prince anſwerable. My opinion of your righteouſneſs in your treaties will prevent on my part any diſtruſt; and if the acknowledged friendſhip between your captive and me, be not a ſufficient ſecurity for you, my remaining in your hands, according to your deſires till his ranſom is paid, will remove every objection.

"This propoſition being accepted, the ſlaves were diſpatched, and returned with camels

camels loaded with gold; we parted from the robbers, after having received their ſolemn promiſe not to reveal my name in the country; where at the entreaties of Azim, I was reſolved to repoſe myſelf after ſo long, and ſo alarming a journey.

"The caſtle of Azim ſtood in the midſt of theſe pleaſing woods, which cover the part of Kharezm in which we were, and the magnificence of its ſtructure announced the former grandeur of its owner. The generous Azim, who had impatiently ſupported the overflowing of my gratitude, ſeeing my attention en-

gaged by the ſumptuouſneſs of the building, and the beauty of the ſpot, ſaid:

"Behold the gifts of your father, poured on me in a time, which alas! cannot be remembered by the inhabitants of this country without a regretting ſigh. Yes, prince, theſe woods, now ſo mournfully ſilent, have often reſounded with cries of joy, for the great Lohoraſb has often honoured them with his royal preſence. Oh! yet I ſeem to hear the acclamations with which the faithful Kharezmians welcomed you to the world; yet I ſeem to ſee the tears which flowed from unſpeakable ſorrow when ſeven years

years after that happy day you was taken away from us; and at the ſame time, for the ſake of peace, this part of Kharezm was annexed to the kingdom of Turan.

" However, as the virtuous Afraſiab, whoſe life is unhappily ſeized by the cruel talon of a dangerous diſtemper, has till now oppoſed the rocks of his prudence and equity, to the raging waves of turbulence; as he has always protected the Kharezmians againſt the malice, which their known fidelity for their former and new ſovereigns excites in the ferocious Turanians; you will find yet preſerved from ruin the agreeable walks that you

have ſo often trodden with the ſwift feet of childiſh vivacity.

" Here you will be unknown, though never forgotten, for even myſelf ſhould not have remembered the tender buds of your infant graces in the bloſſomed beauty of your manly youth, if I had not ſeen you ſince at the court of Herat. I can depend upon the two ſlaves whom we have already truſted; and by my order, they have reported that in you I have found a long loſt ſon. Thus, if you deign to call me by the name of father you may, in recovering yourſelf from your preceding fatigues, find ſome opportunity of obſerving a people which

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it will be one day ſo much your intereſt to know.

"I thankfully accepted the offer of Azim, who daily ſtudied the way of ſurrounding me with pleaſures: but that care was needleſs, for every thing was pleaſing to me in a place where my heart had received its firſt ſenſations. I reviſited with tranſport every ſpot which called to my remembrance the diſplaying of a new idea, or unexperienced ſentiment.

"There was a wood, which recollection endeared particularly to me, as it had been the habitation of ſome favo-

rite fawns, the firſt objects of my inno-cent affections. One day, Azim, being gone to the next city, I retired to this wood, and under its cooling ſhades re-ſigned myſelf to a delicious ſleep, which, after many hours, received an unexpected and moſt pleaſing interruption.

" Methought, a gentle breeze con-veyed to me the perfumes of Khoten; * I eagerly ſought to enjoy them; my blood felt an unuſual warmth; and I awoke in a ſoft agitation, which became a true ex-taſy at the ſight of a raviſhing fair one, who ſtood before me with her beautiful face bent upon mine. Whilſt I lay in-tranced

* A country famous for the excellent muſk it produces.

tranced without ſpeech or motion, the divine form ſuffered her radiant eyes to meet my darting looks; but when in a tranſport I opened my arms to graſp at the proffered happineſs, the viſion diſappeared; and left me in doubt whether it was the faireſt among the daughters of men, or a *Peri*, who had thus made the firſt impreſſion of love in my heart.

"While, in the confuſion of my thoughts, I remained rivered to the ground, I heard the voice of Azim loudly calling upon me. I aroſe, and running towards him, exclaimed:

"Ah! tell me, my father, quickly tell me if I may hope to poſſeſs, or if I

must worship her? if she is a mortal, or a supernatural Being?

"What means my prince? answered Azim, with an uneasy look that quite abashed me.

"I recounted to him what I had seen and felt; upon which he smiled, and said:

"The genius, who protects this place, be praised for sending you such agreeable dreams; and making you as happy in your sleep as I wish you to be in reality.

"These

"These words having entirely fixed me in the opinion that it was a celestial intelligence who had honoured me with her visit; my mind returned to its usual calmness and only retained a pleasing idea of the fair visitant. This, I also ascribed to a power above humanity; for I too well knew, by the example of my unhappy brother, how difficult the passion of love bears the disappointment of its hopes.

"I then, thanked Azim for his kind wish; and told him that as he seemed to have something of moment to impart when he hastened to me, I was sorry

to

to have prevented him by the idle account of a vision.

"I was going to tell you, replied he, that the good Afrasiab had awaked from the long and painful dream of life, when you related to me the short one of a youthful fancy. Argiasb, his brother, has ascended the throne of Turan, and made a proclamation for enjoining all his grandees to repair to his court, in order that his eldest daughter might chuse her husband among them. Though I neither expect nor desire that honour, I must obey the summons, to which I would be very reluctant, if this event were to part me from you.

"And

"And can I attend you to the Turanian court, without exposing myself to be known, said I?

"Undoubtedly, answered Azim; as the intercourse between the Iranians and Turanians has been long forbidden by their respective kings, but much more by their mutual aversion, the consequences of which were to be prevented by that prohibition.

"I am apparently the only subject of this empire who has passed the Gihon during these twelve last years; and it was, when Afrasiab sent me to Lohorasb in order to obtain Morad for his Vizir;

as

as the excellencies of that great man had conquered the prejudice of this untractable people, whose respect for him lasted till death, lately, closed the series of his glorious days. Thus you may with entire safety pass for my son, and assisting at the assembly of so many ambitious rivals, acquire the knowledge of the human heart, so necessary to a king.

" I will, said I, embrace with joy this occasion of improving my mind by examining the various characters of the passions, though I cannot expect to find them as apparent as you suppose them to be; for surely the choice of the princess has been too much courted not to have been

been foreſeen. But tell me whence comes this ſtrange privilege here granted to women?

"As its origin, replied Azim, recalls to the remembrance of the Turanians a time of deſolation and ſhame; the law which eſtabliſhed it, has been kept, in ſome meaſure, a ſecret till this day; for the occaſion of putting that law into execution had not yet happened.

"You know that your anceſtor Caicaus, being arrived at the age in which reaſon ſeems to be tired of too long exerciſing its charge, was deceived by a daughter of darkneſs, who having in vain

tempted

tempted the beautiful Siaveſh his ſon, accuſed him of her own infamous deſign. The voice of innocence could not prevail over the artful cries of Sudaba; and the blind love of Caicaus for a perfidious woman, extinguiſhed his natural affection for a deſerving ſon.

"The prince being thus driven by the wind of calumny from the court of his father, was received with open arms by the king of Turan, who permitted this lofty elm to unite with the fruitful vine of his royal garden.

"The marriage of Siaveſh with the princeſs of Firenkis, who was to ſucceed

to the throne of Turan, raiſed the jealouſy of the Turanians, and awakened their hatred againſt a rival nation. The brother of the king, availing himſelf of theſe diſpoſitions, treacherouſly murdered Siaveſh; but by the courage of Firenkis, he reaped not the fruit he expected from his crime.

"That princeſs, like the eagle, who, in order to avoid the cruel vulture, cut the air with her undaunted pinions, ſeeking for ſome harbouring tree where to depoſit the little one whom ſhe carries in her bill, flew, with her infant in her arms, to a remote country; thence ſhe repaired to the court of Iran with the

young

young Kaikhosru, whose dawning virtues already promised the fair day of his glorious reign.

"Caicaus, who had too late discovered the innocence of Siavesh, shed the tears of repentance over his son, and resigned his crown to him.

"These events, which I have succinctly recalled to your memory, drew the avenging sword of Kaikhosru against the Turanians, whose empire he drenched in blood during the space of many years; being seconded by the mighty lion of valour, his general Rustem.

"At

"At the peace which Lohoraſb granted them, they reflected on the cauſe of their long misfortune; and in order to prevent the ſame for the future, they made a law, by which when the throne devolves to a princeſs, ſhe is obliged to chuſe her huſband among the nobles of the kingdom; and to ſave her a virgin bluſh, it is decreed that the token of her choice is, to preſent an orange to the man ſhe prefers; after which the marriage rites are performed without the king being permitted to oppoſe it.

"Thus the envy which the contention for a crown muſt raiſe in the breaſt of the competitors, is ſmothered by the ſuppoſi-

tion

tion of love's partiality; which ſhould not be the caſe, if the king were to give himſelf the preference. Thus the inconveniency of being governed by a foreign prince, or expoſed to his revenge, are both prevented.

" As the virtuous Afraſiab, who had devoted his life to the duties of a king, ſaw himſelf without children, and his brother with only three daughters, he ordered the education of the princeſſes to be ſuch as to crown his generous deſign for the happineſs of his ſubjects; and took ſuch particular care to inſtill every virtue into the mind of Kanayoum, who is the eldeſt, that the beſt choice is expected from

from her. And now, added Azim with a ſmile, I muſt naturally wiſh to ſee the auſpicious orange preſented to my ſon.

"If the giver were like the celeſtial beauty I have ſeen, I would certainly accept the gift in my preſent ſuppoſed quality; and in my real one, reſign the empire of Turan, in order to enjoy ſuch a felicity without oppoſition; but as no mortal can attain the perfection of the daughters of light, my only deſire is to be ſpectator of the ſtrange ceremony you have deſcribed.

"The preparation of our journey having taken ſome time, we arrived at

Zamin

Zamin only a day before the holding of the auguſt aſſembly; to which I was admitted under the name of Coreſh, ſon of Azim.

"No ſooner were we placed, each according to our rank, than the princeſs entered the palace, attended by the officers of the crown. She ſtopped in the midſt of the brilliant circle of her anxious pretenders; and ſeemed like a ſtately cypreſs between a row of bending palm-trees.

"Though ſhe was veiled, the graceſulneſs of her form excited a violent emotion in my heart; but when, after a

flight

ſlight ſurvey around, ſhe advanced towards me and raiſed up her veil, I fell into the ſame trance which I had proved in the wood of Kharezm, for I found in her the ſame object of my admiration and love.

"Whilſt I gazed on Kenayoum with an inexpreſſible tranſport, ſhe preſented me the fortunate orange, ſaying;

"Here I ſee many accompliſhed men, but in my eyes, you ſurpaſs them all.

"I received that invaluable favour with a reſpectful but eloquent ſilence; and

and being both conducted to the king, we were for ever united in his preſence.

"As in the hours of rapture, I exclaimed, O Locman, this is even above my wiſh! the princeſs aſked me the meaning of theſe words. I related to her the promiſe of the Sage, and expreſſed a fear of owing her heart to a ſupernatural impulſe; for, added I, what merit in the unknown Coreſh can ſo ſuddenly have determined your choice?

"I ſaw Coreſh in the palace of Azim, anſwered ſhe with a modeſt and languiſhing look, and from that inſtant my happineſs was centered in him.

"Though

" Though I had obtained my felicity without any troubles, I was not diſpenſed from paying the uſual tribute of anxiety impoſed on all mankind.

" Argiaſb, who by an effeminate life had weakened his mental faculties, is upon the throne, as the timorous hart in a foreſt, beſieged by hunters. Whilſt his brother oppoſed the ſhield of virtue and magnanimity to the arrows of rebellion, he retired into the fortreſs of pleaſures and idleneſs, where, by being unnoticed, he found a ſafe ſhelter.

" As from that dark receſs he ſuddenly came to the light of ſovereign

power, he is dazzled by it; and with the aſſumed pride of a king, he has the heart of a ſlave. The leaſt breath of murmur ſeems to him the north wind of deſtruction; and he ſeeks to build his happineſs, on the ſlight foundation of popularity, becauſe he wants the firm baſis of courage.

" With theſe diſpoſitions, he trembled at the diſcontent that the marriage of the princeſs excited among his noblemen and their dependants. When they complained of having to expect for king a man born in a new-acquired, and, probably, ill-intentioned country, he liſtened to them with applauſe. At laſt, in order

der to prove his diſpleaſure againſt the princeſs and me, he ordered us to retire from his court.

"I received this injunction with joy; and demanded the province of Kharezm for my retreat. On this, I was anſwered that the place of my retirement was at my choice, and totally indifferent to the ſtate; provided that the princeſs ſhould remain in a caſtle appointed for her, and with a watchful guard ſet over her ſteps.

"The ſame weakneſs, however, which procured me this affront, ſaved me from a worſe treatment; for Azim ſpoke ſo loudly againſt the injuſtice done to me,

that Argiaſb, fancying the Kharezmians already in arms, durſt carry any farther his oppreſſion, at leaſt openly. Then many dark plots were made againſt my life; and the vigilance of Azim to defeat them, fully employed.

This faithful friend, ſeeing the dangers to which I was daily expoſed, preſſed my return to Iran: but I could not ſupport the thought of leaving my beloved princeſs behind; nor of raiſing the ſcourge of war upon my father and my country, by ſending to Herat an account of my ſituation.

" Whilſt

"Whilſt I truſted Providence for an opportunity of extricating myſelf from the toils of malice, the Turanians were threatened with a new and dreadful ruin. A furious lion, and a terrible dragon, appeared at once in the centre of the country, not far from Zamin: the one, with an unwearied rage, covering the fields with ſlaughter; the other, poiſoning the productions of the earth with his venomous breath; and both driving the rural inhabitants to the city, who brought with them the hideous deſtroyer, famine.

"In this extremity, Argiaſb ſolemnly promiſed his two younger daughters to any two men who could kill the two fierce

animals, and bring their ſkins to him. Such a reward animated many brave men; but they periſhed in the attempt; and their fate extinguiſhed both the hopes and the courage of the reſt.

" The public deſolation awakened me from the ſweet lethargy of love, and blowed up the ſparks of my virtue, which lay concealed under the aſhes of an inactive life. I reproached myſelf for not having yet done any thing for fame; and ariſing from the couch of delight, I went one morning in queſt of the deſtructive beaſts, followed only by two truſty ſlaves.

" Heaven

"Heaven bleſſed my deſign, protected my life, and ſtrengthened my arms: the ſcales of the dragon reſiſted not the edge of my ſcymitar, and its point pierced the heart of the lion. The two ſlaves buried the dead, and ſecretly conveyed their ſpoil to the caſtle, where I returned, without being ſuſpected of this deed either by Kenayoum or Azim.

"I had now in my power to put to the bluſh Argiaſb and the Turanians, as I had avenged the public ſcorn thrown upon me by a public benefit: but I deſpiſed the triumph, and imagined a way of making a better uſe of my victory.

"There were two princes of the royal blood, whom the princeſs had raiſed to the ſummit of my eſteem by the ſmooth aſſent of inſinuating praiſes. Firzana and Firuz were their names; and in the ſame time, the * titles which the particular bent of their minds deſerved; as a conſumated prudence regulated the actions of Firzana, and a noble ardour for true glory made thoſe of Firuz worthy of the good fortune which attended them.

"My intention being to reſign the right of the princeſs as ſoon as I could retire into Iran, not to involve the two nations in a new war; I was deſirous to place

* *Firzana*, ſignifies the prudent; and *Firuz*, the happy.

place near the throne, which the aged and infirm Argiaſb could not long poſſeſs, the two men whom I judged the moſt worthy of it, and the moſt capable of inſuring a permanent peace between the reſpective empires.

"With this deſign, I ſent for Firzana and Firuz, who readily accepted my invitation, for their elevated ſouls were above the ſtorm of courtly diſgrace.

"As my actions remained contemptuouſly unobſerved, I conducted the princes to the remoteſt part of the caſtle, and there having preſented them with the ſkins of the lion and the ſerpent, ſaid;

"Take theſe ſpoils; aſk the promiſed reward; your happineſs ſhall be mine.

"At the unexpected ſight and words, Firzana and Firuz ſtood before me in a motionleſs ſurpriſe, which at laſt gave way to admiration and gratitude: for a while they obſtinately refuſed the intended favour, proteſting to publiſh both my valour and generoſity; but my preſſing intreaties prevailed over that reſolution, and I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing my wiſhes, in their behalf, fully accompliſhed.

"It was ſoon after theſe two marriages, that Giamaſh purſued the robbers

on the Turanian dominions, and finding me not with them, ſought to avenge my ſuppoſed death.

"Though but a few victims fell under his arm, weakened by his former wounds; that little effuſion of blood was ſufficient to ripen the ſeeds of animoſity ſo long cheriſhed in the hearts of the Turanians.

"At their clamours, Argiaſb was overwhelmed by fears. A ripened rebellion on one ſide, a war with a dreaded nation on the other, were two rocks equally dangerous; and againſt one of them the ſhattered ſhip of his courage was ſure to

ſplit.

ſplit. At laſt he comforted himſelf by the thought of having newly acquired two valiant ſupports; and he ordered his troops to be put in readineſs for paſſing the Gihon.

"But, what was his conſternation, when having offered the command of his army firſt to Firzana, and afterwards to Firuz, they both declined that honour which they proteſted to belong only to me.

"This proteſtation excited the public laughter; though by ſome it was taken for a cowardly pretence. The princeſs, conſort of Firuz, unable to ſupport the blame

blame and ridicule thrown upon her husband, reproached him with the abſurdity of beſtowing his praiſes and confidence upon a man who was known to the world only by the caprice of her ſiſter, and whoſe actions were as obſcure as his blood.

" Firuz could not endure theſe ſcornful words, and generouſly diſcovered the truth of our late tranſaction to the fair oppoſer of my fame.

" The weight of ſuch a ſecret was above the ſtrength of that princeſſes mind; with the tongue of indiſcretion ſhe conveyed the burthen into the ear

of

of a female confident, who revealed it to the king.

"Argiaſb would not, at firſt, credit the tale; but when it was confirmed by the two princes, he ſent for me in a frantic haſte, and received me with ſo obſequious, aſtoniſhed, and almoſt affrighted looks, that I could not refrain from a ſmile of contempt; but he obſerved not that involuntary motion; and, after reiterated embraces and pardons, declared me his general.

"I concealed the horror, which I felt at this unnatural propoſition; and in order to get time for avoiding the odious

honour

honour without expoſing myſelf, I raiſed ſome ſcruples on the juſtice of the intended war; upon which Argiaſb ordered two of the robbers to be produced, as being able to remove my objections.

"In that inſtant, I thought my ruin certain; for I doubted not of being betrayed by the robbers, who, beſides the immenſe reward they might expect for ſo important a diſcovery, had the death of their companions to avenge.

"However, I aſſumed a firm countenance when they were introduced before the royal preſence; and Argiaſb having commanded them to ſatisfy me in regard

to

to the murder of which they were accuſed by the Iranians, I met their looks without any alteration in mine; whilſt he, who was their chief in the time of my captivity, addreſſed me thus;

"We hope, my lord, that you will eaſily believe us, when we ſwear by all the unſeen powers of heaven and earth, that we have not attempted the life of the prince Kiſhtaſb; as it would not have been our intereſt to commit ſuch a crime even if we could have done it. We proteſt, moreover, that none of thoſe who have been our priſoners actually bear that name; and though, by the profeſſion we exerciſe, it ſeems that the prince

Giamaſb,

Giamaſb, our accuſer, ought to be credited better than we, you undoubtedly know how little one muſt rely upon appearances; and you will do us the juſtice of truſting to our word.

"As the robber, who well knew I had underſtood the meaning of his artful, though candid ſpeech, ſaid no more; the king turning to me, exclaimed;

"Oh! ſurely this is ſufficient to prove the goodneſs of my cauſe: Haſte then, my deareſt ſon, haſte to content my ſubjects in their impatience of ſeeing the wrong done to them avenged; and may ſucceſs be the conſtant attendant of

thy

thy valour. But firſt recompenſe theſe men for the loſſes which they have ſuſtained on this occaſion. Thou mayſt diſpoſe of my treaſure, and command here as myſelf.

"With theſe words, to which I made no reply, he diſmiſſed me, and I retired to a magnificent palace which had been prepared for my reception, being attended by the multitude, who paſſing, as uſual, from one extremity to another, now worſhiped me as the tutelary genius of Turan.

My firſt care was to entertain the robbers in private, and to offer them the reward

reward due to their fidelity; which their chief refuſing, ſaid;

"As no motives whatſoever could have induced us to break the promiſe we had given of not diſcovering your true name; nothing on earth can alſo make us amends for the death of our companions and the ruin of our country. However, if you think us deſerving of ſome gratitude, you may, in ſaving yourſelf, ſave the poor remains of our families and poſſeſſions. For this, you muſt not heſitate to paſs the Gihon at the head of the Turanian army; then the warrior who overruns Daghеſtan and Shirvan with the fury of revenge, will be recalled

to

to the help of Khoraſan; and as he cannot be any other than your brother, you will find ſome means of having a parley with him, in order either to reconcile the two nations together, or to concert ſome meaſure for eſcaping the vigilance of your new and dangerous friends.

"And my princeſs! ſaid I; ſhall I part thus with her for ever?

"No, anſwered the robber, for the weak king is too much in your power to inſiſt upon that ſeparation; and ſhe muſt follow you with a guard commanded by a man devoted to your intereſt. Thus being obeyed by one army, and beloved

by

by the other, it will be impoſſible to want the opportunity of fulfilling your deſires, for which we offer you our faithful ſervices.

"I accept them, ſaid I, in embracing the two robbers; you have opened a fair proſpect to the cloſe and gloomy valley of my thoughts; and this is not the leaſt of the obligations I owe to you, which ſhall for ever live in my remembrance.

"As I had not revealed my ſecret to the princeſs, I could not impart to her the beam of hope and comfort with which my new deſign cheered my heart. Therefore I ſought for my only confident

the

the reſpectable Azim. But, what was my ſurpriſe in finding him with the ſtranger whom in Yemen I had ſent to my dear Zerir!

" I conſidered not the danger of having a new witneſs of my real condition; and running with tranſport into his arms, made him, at once, a thouſand queſtions in regard to my beloved brother, whom, by his Account, I no more doubted to be the hero who had ſo warmly eſpouſed my cauſe.

" However, I found Saheb and Azim utterly averſe to the advice given to me by the robbers; both thinking, that the

ſureſt

ſureſt way of extricating myſelf from the maze of difficulties I was involved in, would be to truſt the love of Kenayoum, and, taking advantage of the liberty ſhe had recovered, to fly immediately with her to Iran.

"The example of Firuz, whoſe confidence had been ſo lately betrayed by his princeſs, encouraged not the propoſed ſcheme, on the imprudence of which I juſtly expatiated; adding, that though Kenayoum had many excellent qualities, I ſtill doubted if ſecreſy were in the number of female virtues.

"Whence

"Whence ariſes this prepoſſeſſion? exclaimed Saheb: Does nature make ſo partial a difference between the two ſex? for ſurely beauty cannot make amends for the weakneſs of the mind. No, prince, we, only, deprive the greateſt part of women of the advantages we acquire by education; and in order to palliate to ourſelves ſuch an injuſtice, we even deny that theſe ſweet roſes can attain the ſolidity of the rough amaranthus; notwithſtanding the repeated inſtances of the contrary which every age produces.

"As it was not difficult to judge by the graceful perſon of Saheb, as well as by this ſpeech, that he had been happy in

in love, I ſmiled at his zeal for the fair ſex; but changed not my intentions: for when a man has taken a wiſe reſolution, he muſt reſiſt the oppoſing voices of remonſtrance, as a high cliff reſiſts the importunate waves of a ruffled ſea.

"Argiaſb granted all my demands, with the readineſs ariſing from puſillanimity; recommending my fate, or rather his own, to heaven with ſuch an effuſion of heart, that he retained not the leaſt ſenſibility for his ſeparation from his daughter.

"The gentle Saheb conſented to defer his return to Yemen, and to command

the private and ſtrong guard I gave to my princeſs, which Azim had compoſed of Kharezmians, among whom he alſo remained, in order to direct them according to the occaſion; and I kept the two robbers near my perſon, as well as the two ſlaves of Azim.

"When I had taken theſe neceſſary meaſures, I paſſed the Gihon, at the head of two hundred thouſand warriors, whoſe thirſt for blood could not be equalled in its exceſs but by their adoration for their general. I availed myſelf of their prepoſſeſſion in my favour, for ſtopping the firſt onſet of their fury; and, in order to give time for Zerir to reach Khoraſan,

I feigned an illneſs, which alarmed and cooled every heart.

" In the mean time, the robbers examined the diſpoſitions of the ſoldiers, and found them ſo averſe to peace, that I altered my firſt deſign, and formed one far more prudent.

" I no ſooner heard the name of Zerir reſound through the Iranian army, than I quitted my intrenchments; and having ranged my troops in order of battle, propoſed them the challenge which I ſent to my brother. At firſt, they refuſed their conſent to it, not from any reluctance to truſt their fate to me,

but from their natural ferocity, which they wanted to exercise, as much as I wished to restrain it.

"However, the princes Firzana and Firuz, who were desirous of returning to me part of the glory which they had, for a time, borrowed from my two first actions, by letting me perform this last, persuaded the Turanians to acquiesce to my will.

"After I had taken their oath not to draw the sword of revenge in case I should be vanquished, and to wait their doom from the king of Iran, I went to a strong hold, situated at a little distance

from the camp, in whoſe walls I had depoſited Kenayoum, and ſpoke to her thus;

"If your virtue and love for me anſwer my eſteem and expectations, fate may, in a few moments, give you an occaſion to prove them, and tranſmit your fame to the remoteſt ages. I am going to challenge the prince Zerir: if I am vanquiſhed, take advantage of the confuſion of our army, and, under the direction of Saheb, ſeek for your Coreſh among the Iranians.

"You ſhall be obeyed; were the only words that the princeſs could pronounce:

she reclined on me as a tender plant reclines on its parent earth when a sudden gust of wind agitates its weak frame; and her melting grief would have been very dangerous for my courage if I had wanted any.

"As my herald was one of the trusty slaves, he returned an answer suitable to my design; and concealed the threats of Zerir, whose impetuous joy at the discovery which was to precede our engagement, I had reserved to myself to repress.

"Thus I advanced on the field of battle with the appearance of an enemy,

but with the heart of a ſubject and a ſon, whoſe intentions were to put a fierce nation in the power of his king, and his honour into the hands of his father."

"Yes, my deareſt ſon, exclaimed Lohoraſb, tenderly embracing the prince, your fame ſhall not ſuffer by this proof of your duty and filial confidence: the Turanians ſhall not accuſe you of having deceived them to their ruin; and the name of traitor ſhall never be joined to that of Kiſhtaſb."

"Such a promiſe, O mighty king, ſaid Guderz, is above your's and human power. Who can deſtroy the hydra of

malice, or ſtop his hundred mouths which prey upon the actions of great men when they give the leaſt encouragement to their voracity? You may eaſily acquit the prince of treachery towards the Turanians, but his fidelity towards you will be for ever arraigned by poſterity, unleſs you clear him of his apparent guilt by ſome extraordinary mark of your eſteem and love.

"The words of wiſdom are on thy lips, O my friend, replied Lohoraſb; they ſteer my courſe to the harbour of tranquility which, ſo often, thou haſt ſeen me view with the eye of deſire. I reſign my crown to Kiſhtaſb; and entruſting his

his virtues with the royal power, I give a ſanction to his conduct, which, though not entirely free from imprudence, deſerves the reward due to a good intention.

"Reign, my ſon, continued he, reign over the Iranians; or rather let Juſtice reign for thee. Offer a generous peace to the Turanians, and oblige them to loſe the odious name of enemy in that of their beloved general. The conditions of the treaty are entirely in thy power; for, from this moment, thou commandeſt in all the extent of my dominions, except the part of Kharezm which belong to us; and in which Zerir muſt exert the excellence of his heart as a king, with the

same warmth as he has exerted it as a brother. Let a noble emulation for true glory be a constant proof of your mutual esteem: every laudable action on each part will cement your unparelleled friendship, and besprinkle my last days with the dew of content."

While the king spoke thus, the two princes ceased not to embrace tenderly his knees with tokens of reluctance for the proffered gifts, which they prepared themselves openly to refuse, when Lohorasb added;

"Who are the sons that can deny to their aged father the relieving him from

a heavy and too long ſupported weight? Beware to be miſled by your filial love, and treſpaſs not againſt obedience in the moſt intereſting proof I ever can aſk you of it."

Theſe words having put the ſeal of duty on the lips of reſpect, he placed his crown upon the head of Kiſhtaſb. In that inſtant, Kenayoum entered the royal tent, conducted by Saheb and Azim.

The ſplendor of a diadem ſtruck not the eyes of the princeſs, who running into the arms of Kiſhtaſb, ſaw only Coreſh in her beloved huſband: but her raptures were hardly equal to the joy of

Zerir

Zerir at this new providential meeting with Saheb.

Kiſhtaſb having thus inſured the acquiſition of his princeſs; it was now time to treat with the Turanians: on which, it being reſolved to ſend for their chiefs, Guderz and Azim were charged to make this propoſal, and to offer themſelves as hoſtages till their return.

The Turanians, faithful to their promiſe, refuſed the proffered ſecurity, ſaying, that they were bound to accept any juſt conditions, and would ſubmit to the hardeſt for the ranſom of their general.

In

In the mean time, Kiſhtaſb aſcended the throne with Kenayoum; and both were ſurrounded with all the pageantry which the Aſiatics carry even to their camps.

Nothing can expreſs the ſurpriſe of Firzana, Firuz, and the other commanders, at a ſight ſo little expected: they almoſt doubted of its reality; when Kiſhtaſb ſmiling on them, ſaid;

"Let not, my friends, let not your hearts be changed by the changement of my condition; the king of Iran is ſtill, and deſires ever to be, your Coreſh. Argiaſb will undoubtedly forgive me a deceit,

deceit, which has ſaved him from the guilt and the dangers of an unjuſt war; for Kiſhtaſb was certainly carried bound in chains in his dominions before he aſſumed the perſonage of Coreſh, and conſequently the zeal of Giamaſb has a good excuſe for its treſpaſs.

"As I have proved to you that a generous mind, far from having thoſe mean jealouſies of one nation againſt another, extends its benevolence to all mankind; let the unnatural averſion between the Turanians and the Iranians be extinguiſhed for ever. I reſign the right of Kenayoum to the throne of Turan; and rejoice

rejoice in thinking that happily the prince Firzana is to ſucceed to it.

"A treaty between a father and his ſon cannot be but an interchange of love; thus I propoſe it to Argiaſb, and thus I will inviolably keep it myſelf; only entreating him to grant his peculiar protection to the Kharezmians, among whom I was born, and who deſerve the favour of their ſovereigns."

"O excellent prince! exclaimed Firzana, who, having performed the duty of a man in ſo many different ſtations, is now juſtly exalted to that of king of kings; your deſire of a permanent peace between

tween the two rival nations ſhall be accompliſhed, if the examples of virtue have any influence on the human heart. Let your Firzana be the meſſenger of your propoſition of an eternal amity: he hopes inceſſantly to come back with the joyful acceptation of Argiaſb; and if his advice is believed, with the ceſſion in your behalf of Kharezm, as a portion for the princeſs; and a tribute to your generoſity."

While the Turanian chiefs were entertained with a royal magnificence, and during the ſhort journey of Firzana, the two armies held a friendly intercourſe, which made them regret the days they had

had ſpent under the ſtormy ſky of a blind hatred. However, the prudent Guderz, who diſtruſted the conſtancy of new ſentiments ingrafted on old prejudices, repreſented to Kiſhtaſb that the part of Kharezm offered by Firzana, might be ſtill an occaſion of ſoon breaking the wiſhed-for peace, and that the Gihon was a natural barrier between the two empires. But Kiſhtaſb liſtened not to his words; and in order to have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing Zerir reign over the former extent of that beautiful kingdom, accepted the preſent mentioned, which the timorous Argiaſb humbly offered, with the moſt ſolemn proteſtations of love and gratitude.

The

The new king of Iran gave another inſtance, no leſs dangerous, of his diſlike againſt remonſtrances, in entruſting the chief of the robbers with the government of Dagheſtan and Shirvan; notwithſtanding the warning of their paſt conduct, and the entreaties of Azim, who juſtly thought that they could be rewarded in a more ſuitable manner.

Though Lohoraſb could not approve his ſon in theſe occaſions, he was not willing to interpoſe againſt his reſolutions an authority which he had reſigned; and truſting his direction to Providence, as well as his correction to the conſequences of his faults, he retired, with his queen and

Guderz,

Guderz, to the city of Balkh; there to devote the remains of his life to quiet and contemplation.

These were not the only wrong steps which Kishtasb took in the beginning of his reign. He recompensed the zeal which Giamasb had shewn for him with unlimited confidence; without considering that even if that zeal had been artless, if the abilities of that prince had answered his trust, it was still imprudent to deposit his glory and repose into the hands of a secret rival to his throne; since an absolute vizir can pierce the heart which relies on him, with a thousand invisible shafts of ingrateful ambition.

While

While Kiſhtaſb was making ſo bad a choice, Zeiir remained fixed in that he had made of Saheb, who, by the order of Locman, confirmed his acceptance of the always painful, but, when faithfully acquitted, glorious charge; only deſiring leave to repair to Yemen in order to bring his family back with him.

When Morad, forewarned of his approaching diſſolution, haſtened the journey of Saheb to Turan, he expected to find in his friend a warm protector for his wife and his only ſon. Since his death, the courageous Gulrouz, who was inured to fatigue above the delicacy of her ſex, had attended Saheb; and as

ſhe

ſhe deſired to preſent the young Elich to Locman, ſhe could not be denied in ſo juſt a requeſt.

Though the near hope of re-union ſweeten the bitterneſs of ſeparation, Zerir could not part again with Saheb without a grief ſcarcely leſs than that he felt in leaving his brother: thus he took the road of his kingdom with a heavineſs of heart which ſeems to have been the omen of his impending misfortunes.

As, however, a paſſionate mind cannot long cheriſh ſorrow, the gloomineſs of his thoughts was diſpelled by the beams of ſuſpended love; his firſt care was to

ſend

ſend truſty meſſengers into every part of Aſia, in order to diſcover the abode of Periſadeh; for though he had particularly charged Saheb to make that enquiry, he ſtill diſtruſted the Sage Locman on that point.

If the tedious hours of love's expectations could be beguiled by objects, foreign to that impetuous ſentiment, Zerir would have found that advantage on a throne ſurrounded with all that can touch the heart and pleaſe the ſenſes. He was received with adorations by his new ſubjects, who were the moſt ſprightly and elegant people of Aſia, and whoſe looks watched his deſires. The country diſplayed

played to his eyes every charm of nature, enhanced by the ornaments of the ſofteſt and moſt ſeducing arts.

At firſt, he tried, by turns, the many means of happineſs, or at leaſt of diſſipation, he had in his power, and found them incapable of waving the ſtorm of his paſſions; againſt which he wiſely recurred to the ſhelter of uſeful occupations, in diſcharging himſelf of the duties that his rank impoſed. But even in this, he was driven by the outrageous wind of his violent temper far off the limits preſcribed by reaſon.

His

His good qualities and virtues were, by their excess, as hurtful as defects and vices. His justice turned into cruelty; his clemency into weakness; his munificence into prodigality; and his love of order into insupportable tyranny: insomuch that every one of his actions was attended by trouble, and followed by repentance.

In the midst of these evils, which he sensibly felt, without knowing their source, he ceased not to wish for the return of Saheb, the presence of whom was still rendered more necessary to him, by a war, in which he was involved by his usual impetuousness.

The

The little country of Dilem, which lies on the border of the Caſpian ſea, though reckoned among the provinces of Iran, and paying a tribute to that empire, had retained the name of kingdom, and was governed by its own ſovereign. This privilege was granted to the Dilemians by Feridun, who had been ſaved by them from the rage of Zohac the uſurper of his throne.

As weakneſs keeps itſelf within the intrenchments of humility, the kings of Dilem had been always cautious not to give offence to their neighbours, and had often ſwallowed the bitter draught of injury without murmuring.

On the contrary, as power is the greatest incentive to resentment, the Dilemians, being now supported by the hand of malice and revenge, threw off the mask of patience, and called an army against Zerir, who had slighted them in the following manner.

Among the noble Kharoumians, who courted the rising sun of royalty, Narsi was distinguished by some of its favorable beams. The youth, already proud of possessing many gifts of nature and fortune, soon thought that no bounds could be set to his desires.

He

He had been ſent on an embaſſy to Dileth, in order to reconcile ſome differences which had ariſen between the reſpective merchants of the two countries: for Zerir, not contenting himſelf with encouraging trade as a wiſe prince ought, entered into thoſe minute circumſtances of it which better ſuit the vigilance of ſubordinate authority.

The demands of a renowned and dreaded warrior could not but be granted by the peaceful Dilemians. Their king omitted nothing that could ſhew his reſpect for Zerir; and ſummoned not only his courtiers, but even his only daughter

Sitara to assist at the royal entertainment he gave to his ambassador.

This young princess was a blazing star raised by fate against the presumptuous Narsi, whose unruly mind, instead of being curbed by reason, obeyed only to the spur of audacious love.

In contempt of the rights of hospitality and the duty of his sacred character, he assailed a delightful house, where Sitara used to enjoy the charms of retirement, guarded only by the deserved security of an inoffensive people; and forced her to the ship which waited for his return to Kharezm.

He durſt not, however, rely ſo far on his favor with Zerir, as to repair to his court; but ſtopped at a caſtle which he had on the border of the Caſpian lake; whither he was ſo cloſely followed by the brother of Sitara, that the night deſtined for the enjoyment of his guilty love, lighted, with its pale torches, the moſt horrid ſcene of revenge.

The prince of Dilem, deſpairing of taking the caſtle as ſoon as the circumſtances required, preferred the death of his ſiſter to her diſhonour, and ordered his ſhips to throw brands of fire on the devoted walls, which were conſumed in a few hours; and when he thought that

not a single person had escaped the conflagration, he turned his sails towards Dilem.

As among the natural passions, whose excess confuses the mind, there is none which is more expert to make its arm than anger; so Narsi, favoured by the tumult, found means to pierce through the ranks of soldiers who surrounded his burning castle; and hastily forsaking the princess, waited, at some distance, for the issue of the dreadful event, as if he had not been concerned in it. But, when the rosy morning, contending with the expiring flames, shewed him the horrid ruins of the night, his enemies retiring, and

the neighbouring inhabitants assembled on the shore, he left his place of concealment, and rending his vestments, made the bittereſt complaints and imprecations againſt the treachery of the Dilemians, without mentioning the provocation given to them by his crime.

Thence he haſtened to the court of Kharezm, and told Zerir that the king of Dilem, inſtead of granting his juſt demands, had attempted his life, and purſued him to the caſtle he had taken for ſhelter againſt his malice, and from whence he had providentially ſaved himſelf.

At this falſe repreſentation, which none appeared to contradict, Zerir entered in the moſt violent fury, and ſwore that nothing but the deſtruction of the Dilemians could ſatisfy him for the injury done to his ambaſſador.

The king of Dilem hearing that Narſi had waved the hand of juſtice, was ſtabbed to the heart by the dagger of grief; and his wound was aggravated by the terror of Zerir's reſentment. At laſt, he reſolved to ſend an embaſſy to Kharezm, in order to lay the fact before a prince no leſs celebrated for his equity than for his valour. He, conſequently, loaded a ſhip, not only with the uſual

preſents

preſents which are ſent on theſe occaſions among the Aſiatics, but alſo with all the rarities that his predeceſſors had for many ages collected.

His ambaſſador, who was choſen among the moſt eminent men in rank and wiſdom of his court, departed with juſt, though too ſoon deluded, hopes; for, when he arrived on the Kharezmian ſhore, he was, by the order of Zemir, put to death, with all his retinue; the gifts were thrown into the ſea, and the ſhip deſtroyed by fire.

The complaining voice of innocence was ſtifled by Narſi, who being unhap-

pily intrusted with the execution of the fatal orders, eagerly pressed the slaughter, by which he once more avoided his own punishment.

After this, no direct method of justification being left to the Dilemians, and their other endeavours for making truth reach the ear of Zerir having proved fruitless, they applied to the governors of the adjacent provinces, in order to obtain their mediation; and particularly to the chief of the robbers, whose districts being Dagheſtan and Shirvan, almoſt joined to Dilem.

Though

Though these ferocious banditti had kept themselves within the limits of duty since Kishtash had distinguished them by a favor far above the instance they had given of a probity not untainted by self-interest, their base hearts could not forgive past injuries, when an opportunity offered itself to avenge them.

They durst not openly attack Zerir for his having sought to rescue his brother iniquitously held in captivity by them, while that brother was their sovereign: but instead of encouraging the application of the Dilemians for peace, they excited them to war; offering them all the succours that two powerful countries could

could afford, provided that this tranſaction ſhould remain under the veil of ſecreſy.

As there is not a more inveterate enemy than he, who, having been obliged awhile to ſmother the voice of reproach, becomes at once freed from that hard neceſſity; the king of Dilem embraced with tranſport the propoſal of the robbers; and made his preparations with ſo much celerity, that he entered Kharezm at the head of a numerous army before his bold deſign of making the firſt attack could be even ſuſpected.

Zerir

Zerin despised an adversary of whom he knew not the resources; and supposing that the Dilemians had left their country deserted, he rejoiced in the hopes of effecting their utter destruction, by a single battle. But he soon found, to his cost, that an impetuous valour was not sufficient against a disciplined army as it had been against unruly bands of barbarian mountaineers.

His violent temper not admitting of prudence, whose support is stronger than the arm of the most boasted leader of thousands and thousands, the rules for placing advantageously his troops were unknown to him; and by the fury of his first onset,

his

his fame being already blasted, he must at the same time contend with the wrath of an undaunted soldier, and overwhelmed with the shame due to a frantic general. Thus he fled from battle, while the enemy, advancing with order towards the heart of his kingdom, threw around terror and discouragement.

The fidelity of the Khanezenians was yet unshaken, notwithstanding the bad consequences of their king's best intentions; but their utmost efforts could no longer delay the ruin of their country, without some immediate succour, which Zeris could not resolve himself to ask against a people whom he had so much contemned,

commended, and whom he was full in hope of exterminating by his own labour.

At last, his haughty mind was overcome by fortitude, and the sighs of respect, which he daily heard, had an influence which the clamour of discontent would surely have been deprived of. He sent to his brother an account of the extremity to which he was reduced, and of the event by which he thought the justice of his cause sufficiently proved.

Nobilis, in compassion for his subjects, impatiently expected a favorable answer, and with his usual firmness sustained the heavy weight of ill success; he was suddenly

ſuddenly deprived of the only conſola-
tion left in misfortunes, the conſciouſneſs
of not deſerving them.

An unknown fair having preſented her-
ſelf to the foot of his throne, entreated
him for a private audience; to which be-
ing admitted, ſhe ſpoke thus:

"Ceaſe, O juſt king, ceaſe to cheriſh
the monſter who every day ſatiates his
rage with the torrent of blood he cauſes
to be ſpilled; for the malignant breath of
his guilt, in ſurrounding thee with its
thick vapour, draws upon thy ſacred
head the dreadful ſhowers of heaven's
wrath.

"I

"I am the princeſs of Dilem, whom the traitor Narſi has forced away from her friends and country; and whoſe honor has been preſerved only by the ſalutary cruelty of a brother anxious for her virtue and fame. The natural inſtinct by which the moſt unfortunate being ſeeks to prolong his life ſaved me from the flames, through which, under the diſguiſe of a ſlave, I paſſed unnoticed by my baſe perſecutor, and by my unpitying friends. The humble roof of a peaſant was my aſylum; in which my days would have been buried in obſcurity, if the deſire of undeceiving a virtuous and betrayed prince, had not been ſtronger in my heart than any thirſt of revenge."

The

The ſurpriſe and conſternation of Zemir increaſed at every word that Sitara pronounced; at laſt the hand of remorſe preſſed ſo hard upon his mind, that he fell back on the royal couch, ſeemingly in the agony of death.

Awhile the princeſs ſtood before him, trembling like a leaf when it feels the firſt ſhock of an autumnal wind: but as the praiſe ſhe had heard of Zemir had planed the way of her heart to love, being emboldened by this new gueſt, ſhe approached the prince, and recalled him to life.

A

A look of gratitude was the reward of her care; though, perhaps, her beautiful eyes in tears would have excited a more tender ſentiment, if the tumultuous paſſions raiſed in the breaſt of the injured king had not weakened their influence.

Nothing can expreſs the confuſion and terror of Nafil, when, being brought into the royal preſence, he ſaw the incontenible accuſer of his crime, and his irrevocable doom wrote on the irritated brow of his ſovereign.

In vain his mean ſoul ſought for mercy: his head was ſtruck off, and committed

mitted to the care of an herald who was ordered to attend Sitara, to whom Zerir ſaid;

"Go, princeſs, to the camp of your father; preſent him with this horrid token of my repentance: let him know, that he may aſk any juſt reparation from a king, who, confeſſing the badneſs of his cauſe, and the folly of his conduct, thinks himſelf obliged to ſue for peace, and will pay it at any price, ſave the honor and duty of his rank."

Sitara ſighed at this order; and with trembling ſteps, took the road of the Dilemian army; being no leſs reluctant to quit

quit an amiable prince already too much beloved, than to encounter the looks of a ſuſpicious and cruel father.

Her fears were not groundleſs, for the king of Dilem ſtepped back at her ſight; and after having heard her with a ſtern countenance, exclaimed;

" Art thou then eſcaped from the flames, which honour had kindled, to cover my victorious brow with ſhame? If any truth is in thy tale, why haſt thou not truſted thy revenge to thy friends, and why comeſt thou from the camp of mine and thy enemy in order to ſue for his preſervation? The ſacrifice of thy raviſher,

who

who has undoubtedly saved thy life, and robbed thee not only of thy virtue, but even of modesty, shall neither blind nor satisfy me. As it has been made to the perfidious king, who has bribed thee to this last step of abandoned impudence, let him reward thee according to thy desert.

"I will make no peace with him, unless, in coming himself to sue for it, he present me with thy head if he thinks thou art guilty; or raise thee to his throne if he judges thee innocent; and, at the same time, renounce the part of his kingdom which I already possess by the right of a just conquest.

"And

"And thou, continued he, turning to the herald, whose life I spare, in order that thou mayest conduct back this unworthy woman, beware of ever approaching my camp, without the assurance that thy king accepts the conditions I stoop to propose."

At this excess of insolence, Zerir was more depressed than irritated; for his soul, so difficultly stopped in its motions, was sinking into the gulf of despair. But, as his heart was too good to be hardened against the grief of others by its own, he raised up Sitara, who had prostrated herself before him whilst the herald

herald reported the barbarous ſpeech of her father.

With the gentle voice of compaſſion he conveyed comfort into her mind; aſſuring her of a brotherly affection, inſtead of a faith which he could not have given her by ſo odious a compulſion, even if it had not been deſtined by love to another. Then ordering his attendants to treat the injured princeſs according to her rank and his eſteem for her, he retired into his inner aparments, where a new load of affliction was brought upon him by the meſſenger whom he expected from Herat.

He

He eagerly unfolded the fair ſheet of his hope; but, what was his confuſion when he found that, inſtead of being enlivened with the expreſſions of tenderneſs traced by the pencil of friendſhip, it were blackened with reproof, flowing from the pen of inſult in theſe words;

"Kiſhtaſb, king of kings, to prince Zerir .... If the war you have begun yourſelf, and without my participation, though againſt one of my vaſſals, hath a juſt cauſe; truſt to Heaven and your own valour for its ſucceſs; and bluſh to aſk any other ſupport. If, on the contrary, and as fame reports, your raſhneſs and imprudence have unſheathed your

ſword, receive humbly the chaſtiſement due to your folly and crime; in which I will not involve my innocent ſubjects."

As when a benighted traveller who has taken ſhelter in ſome cavern againſt the threats of a ſtormy ſky, and feels its huge roof ſhaking over his head, runs forlorn through the maze of dangers he had ſought to avoid; Zerir, deprived of his laſt hope, ruſhed, with redoubled fury, into the midſt of his enemies, from whom, firſt the weakneſs of his army, and his remorſe ſince had kept him. But, though death itſelf ſeemed to glide on the edge of his ſcymitar, and to crop with him the ranks of the Dilemians; he

he was, at laſt, overcome by the many wounds he received, and brought back, by his faithful warriors, in a ſtate of inſenſibility happier for him than the anguiſh of his thoughts.

Now the ſeeds of compaſſion and piety which nature hath ſown in the human heart, and which are ripened into generous actions when the ſoil has not been perverted, prevailed with the Kharezmians over every other ſentiment. They could not but be very much diſſatisfied with a king who had plunged them into the gulf of miſery, and brought their country to the eve of its ruin. They had equal cauſe to complain againſt his imprudent admi-

niſtration in the time of peace, and his inconſiderate actions in the time of war; nevertheleſs, every one of them reſolved to ſpill the laſt drop of his blood, rather than ſuffer him to fall into the hands of his inſolent enemy.

In vain the king of Dilem, whoſe revenge would have ſatiated itſelf upon the noble prey, offered the moſt tempting conditions to theſe diſtreſſed but incorruptible ſubjects, if they would ſurrender the royal city of Zamakhſhar. Not only the ſcattered troops, with a pious ardour which redoubled their courage and ſtrength, haſtened to collect themſelves within the walls of that well-

fortified place, but all the citizens, and even the women, took arms in defence of their unfortunate ſovereign, though abandoned by his brother and by himſelf to deſpair, and almoſt deprived of life.

Such a glorious proof of fidelity was not long unrewarded. Providence, in whoſe equitable ballance the faults of Zerir could not paſs for crimes, and the virtue of his ſubjects had its full weight, ſupplied them with a ſuccour ſtronger than an army.

Saheb, who by unforeſeen events had been detained in his journey, at laſt arrived; and entering Zamakhſhar by the

ſide of the Gihon which was not beſieged, gave a new life to every heart.

As his merit was known by many of the Kharezmians, who had ſeen him at the court of Afraſiab, he was received as no miniſter of ſtate has ever been; but as every one would be, if the people committed to his care, inſtead of fearing in him an upſtart and mercenary power, could look upon him as the guardian of their liberty; the moderator, and not the abettor of thoſe exceſſes too common in arbitrary monarchs.

The good vizir haſtened to the apartment of Zerir, in order to revive him

in his friendly embraces, and to receive from him the neceſſary intelligence on the ſituation of affairs; but he was diſappointed in both theſe deſigns.

The united and malignant influence of a raging fever and a deep ſorrow had too much inflamed the blood of the lingering prince not to affect his reaſon: Saheb found him in this ſtate of alienation, ſurrounded by his afflicted ſervants; but particularly under the care of the gentle Sitara, by whom he was attended with the vigilance and tenderneſs of a ſlave who wears the chain of gratitude and love.

It was a hard task for Saheb to hear the account of Zerir's imprudence from any other than himself; for his noble soul was above the arts employed by those who, however, are numbered among the best statesmen, and who, being called to the helm of government in some critical juncture, exaggerate the bad condition of affairs in order to enhance the merit of success, or to weaken the mortification of disappointment.

Neither ambition, nor self-sufficiency, had influenced Saheb in the acceptance of his charge; he had only consulted his duty towards mankind, his affection for Zerir, and above all, his obedience to Locman;

Locman; no wonder if, with ſuch pure motives, he ſtrayed from the uſual path of mercenary vizirs, excuſed the faults of his king, exalted his good qualities, and endeavoured to perſuade the Kharezmians that their juſt concern for Zerir was the only cauſe of their not having perceived many reſources yet left to them, and which he would apply himſelf to point out, and make uſe of.

With the ſame gentleneſs and diſintereſted views, he palliated the diſheartened reſolution they had taken of remaining within the walls of Zamakhſhar, and of acting only upon the defenſive; ſhewing them, at the ſame time,

the neceſſity of repulſing the king of Dilem before he could cloſe a blockade, by which they ſhould be deprived of every ſuccour: and he propoſed to ſend the young Elich to the Kharezmians in order to make a new levy of troops among them.

As Saheb was not yet arrived at that ſeaſon of years in which the maturity of the mind is deſerted by bodily ſtrength; and was not like thoſe who coldly trace in the council a plan of dangers which they are not to encounter; he ſelected a body of reſolute men, and ſallied the ſame night from the gate which faced the camp of the enemy, who, elevated

and

and lulled to ſecurity by paſt ſucceſs, were the more eaſy to be thrown into confuſion.

During the tumult of the action, and favoured by the obſcurity, Elich paſſed the river in ſafety; and as the name of his father Morad, as well as that of Saheb, were held in veneration in thoſe diſtricts, he not only reanimated the Kharezmians, who had already ſuffered greatly by the war, but alſo engaged many Turanians in a quarrel which they were to fight under a leader they ſo perfectly eſteemed.

In the mean time, the vizir, by frequent ſallies and bold attacks, having forced

forced the king of Dilem to retire, and entirely cleared the border of the Gihon from hoſtile ſpears, the friendly warriors landed, without impediment, on the ſame ſpot which the enemy had occupied.

Now the bird of hope extended his golden pinions over the Kharezmians, who eagerly deſired to offer a deciſive battle to the ravagers of their country: but though Saheb knew the neceſſity of not letting their ardour cool; he could not help making his preparations for that fatal encounter with reluctance.

It was not the conſciouſneſs of having eſpouſed a bad cauſe that oppreſſed his heart;

heart; for, though he bemoaned the firſt error of Zerir, he thought that the reſentment of the king of Dilem had ceaſed to be juſt from the moment in which, being not ſatisfied with the puniſhment of the guilty, he had perſiſted in the reſolution of ſhedding the blood of the innocent; notwithſtanding all the other reparations offered to him. But the excellent vizir was not of that ſavage race of ſtateſmen, who treat the lives of ſubordinate beings as the trees of a park, which are condemned to the ſaw for the benefit of ever ſo little a proſpect.

He thought that the ſhort period of years allotted to mankind being partly ſpent

ſpent in vain, though often unavoidable purſuits, the attempt of ſtill abridging it was unwarrantable; except in the caſe of a juſt defence, and with the intention of procuring the tranquility neceſſary to ſet out advantageouſly the precious jewel of time.

To this motive, which, indeed, influenced him greatly on the preſent occaſion, was joined another no leſs prevailing: for, by the truſt repoſed in him, he conſidered himſelf as obliged to repair the wrongs done by Zerir to the Kharezmians: but as, at the ſame time, he wiſhed that this prince ſhould enjoy the happineſs he intended to procure to

ſo

ſo faithful a people, and reap the glory of his ſucceſs, he could not ſee him in the deplorable condition he was, without a grief which damped his zeal, and enforced the perplexity natural to a mind endowed with a general benevolence when forced by duty and neceſſity to do harm to any one.

However, before the day fixed for the action, his fond deſire obtained the favour it deſerved from the power to whom belongs the ſcrutiny of hearts, and who is pleaſed to reward intentions unallayed with the baſe metal of ſelf-intereſt.

In

In a lucid interval, Zeriz knew his friend; and from that inſtant, death ceaſed to hover on his head; his reaſon reſumed its ſeat, and even reſiſted a torrent of joy which poured down in a flood of delightful tears upon his enlivened cheeks.

His affecting repentance for his paſt conduct, and his anxiety for the conſequences of it, confirmed Saheb in the favourable opinion he entertained of his heart; in the hope of ſeeing his virtuous ends anſwered, and once more a good king upon the throne of righteouſneſs.

With

With this agreeable proſpect, the vizir advanced againſt the enemy, to whom he was much inferior in number; but, as his army was put in array by prudence and led by courage, victory, who is the attendant of theſe two united virtues, followed his ſteps, and crowned his brow with the wreath of glory.

Though the firſt ſhock was violent on each ſide, the Dilemians were ſoon put to the rout; the prince of Dilem made priſoner; and the diſbanded troops indebted for their lives only to the mercy of Saheb, who forbad purſuing them.

This

This diſaſter having thrown the king of Dilem from the ſummit of arrogant pride into the abyſs of diſcouragement, he would have accepted any conditions for the liberty of the prince his ſon, and for his ſafe retreat to his country. But, as he had branded the generoſity of Zerir with the name of mean weakneſs, and ſought to abuſe it, he feared the ſame fate for himſelf.

He then recurred to diſſimulation, the reſource of narrow minds; and for many days ſeemed unconcerned at his misfortunes; though carefully keeping himſelf within his intrenchments. At laſt he ſent a herald to the Kharezmian camp, with

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a cold invitation to a parley, in order to bring matters to accommodation.

The ſagacious vizir pierced through this artful conduct; and doubted not of the diſpoſitions it was intended to conceal: but, as he was reſolved to atone by a generous peace for the injuſtice which had occaſioned the war, he accepted the propoſal.

On the day appointed for the meeting of the king of Dilem with Saheb, Zerir, whoſe health was recovered, and who expected the return of his tranquility of mind from the event that was to deliver him from his remorſe, in order to beguile the

the tedious hours of expectation, repaired, unſeen by his attendants, to ſome pleaſing meadows and woods which ſurrounded Zamakhſhar.

He had no marks of his rank, and was only armed with his ſcymitar. Thus he wandered unnoticed, and plunged in a reverie which carried him farther than he intended; and of which he was rouzed by the voice of the bird who had formerly drawn him from the company of Saheb. No ſooner his ear was ſtruck by the ſame words, *Periſadeh loves Zerir!* than he haſtened, with the ſame eagerneſs, to the place from which the agreeable ſound came; and found the little

indiſcreet

indiſcreet animal in the poſſeſſion of ſome merchants who had taken the advantage of the truce to purſue their journey.

He, at firſt, mildly aſked them to ſell him the bird; and even for ſome time continued his entreaties and the offer of an immenſe price: but, being not only refuſed with ſcorn, but alſo brutally repulſed, the fierceneſs of his temper overleaped the weak barrier of his prudence, and drawing his ſcymitar, he attempted to have by force what he could not obtain by perſuaſion.

The merchants, trembling at his fury as the ſwallow trembles at the ſight of the hawk,

hawk, like that harmleſs traveller, diſplayed the wings of flight; and Zerir galloping after them, unwarily entered the lines of the Dilemians, inceſſantly crying, "Stop, mean cowards; ſell me the bird, or at leaſt diſpute him with a courage worthy of the perſon to whom it belongs."

The ſentinels hearing ſo ſtrange a conteſt, took it for the machinery of ſome ſecret deſign againſt them; and at their giving the alarm, Zerir was inſtantly ſurrounded, diſarmed, and loaded with chains as well as the merchants.

In

In the mean time, Saheb had concluded the peace with the king of Dilem, who could not well conceal his ſurpriſe at the advantageous conditions he had obtained: for, though a good man may, through experince, explore the heart of a bad one, this can never find the ſpring of a noble and virtuous action.

The king of Dilem was in the height of his joy, when he heard of the capture made by his ſentinels; and he being willing to make a ſhew of generoſity, ordered the priſoners to be brought into preſence; ſaying to the vizir;

"There

"There are ſome men who have broken the truce and been taken in arms by my troops; but to give a proof that no ſeed of animoſity remains in my heart, I will make them enjoy the benefit they have forfeited, and deliver them to you even before the general exchange of priſoners."

Saheb, to whom the lives of no individuals were indifferent, thankfully accepted the boon. But, how much he was ſurpriſed to ſee his king among the captives!

Happily for Zerir that he was never ſeen by the Dilemians but at the head of his

his troops and under armour. To this circumſtance he owed his ſafety; but more ſo to the prudence and preſence of mind of his vizir, who with great compoſure ſaid to the king of Dilem;

"Both theſe men and I are much indebted to your generoſity for the good treatment they met with after their irregular behaviour."

Then turning to them with an air of cold gravity, he added;

"Since the king has been ſo gracious as to grant you your liberty, begone;

learn to act with more prudence; and haſte to conceal your merited bluſhes."

Zerir, who by his danger had been awakened from his dream of love, and made conſcious of his folly, admired the wiſdom of Saheb in a ſilent confuſion. He well underſtood the meaning of his laſt words; and, under pretence of *concealing* his *bluſhes*, covered his face in paſſing through the crowd of the vizir's attendants, who, at the ſight of him, would have undoubtedly given ſome dangerous token of ſurpriſe and conſternation. Thus he ſpurred his ſteed towards Zamakhſhar; but not without obſerving the road which the merchants took,

took, after whom his firſt care was to ſend, in order to have them brought back into his preſence.

In the mean time, Saheb, whoſe uneaſineſs had increaſed by being reſtrained, haſtened his return: but if, till then, he had thought that it would have been cruel to afflict Zerir with reproaches when he ſo much wanted conſolation, he was, now, reſolved to ſpare him no more.

He approached him with the ſevere looks of alarmed friendſhip, and offended reaſon; but was not a little diſconcerted at finding him careſſing the

fatal bird with raptures, and being thus addreſſed by him;

"Do not diſturb the tranſport of a ſoul ſo little accuſtomed to joy. I know all you can ſay; but I maintain that the acquiſition which my raſhneſs has made is worth ten kingdoms like that which has been preſerved from ruin by your valour and prudence. Inſtead of expatiating on the danger I have run, and the advantage that the king of Dilem would have had by knowing me, help me, my friend, help me to thank the favourable genius who has conducted my ſteps, and removed the miſt which concealed

concealed from me the path of happiness.

"Periſadeh, the divine Periſadeh, is the princeſs of Zableſtan, the daughter of the celebrated Ruſtem; and I ſhall join to the felicity of poſſeſſing her charms, the glory of an alliance with the moſt renowned hero that ever Aſia has boaſted of. Let me then haſte to ſign the treaty of peace which you have concluded: I leave to your wiſdom the care of putting it in execution; and I fly on the wings of deſire to the country of my beloved."

As a ſkilful pilot, who cannot in his direct courſe reſiſt the fury of hoſtile winds and daunt the waves of a foaming ſea, gives way, and by tacking about, not only eſcapes a ſhipwreck, but ſoon returns into the track of his voyage; thus Saheb, without oppoſing or approving the raptures of Zerir, gently expoſtulated with him on the neceſſity of entirely reſtoring peace and proſperity to his people before he ſhould make the offer of his kingdom to Periſadeh, and preſent himſelf before a warrior ſo good a judge of true glory.

The method of intereſting the paſſions in the cauſe of reaſon ſeldom miſſes its aim:

aim: Zerir was perſuaded, and entered into the meaſures of Saheb with a docility and an ardour ſuitable to his character, and to the proſpect he had in view.

Saheb, in his conference with the king of Dilem, had not forgot the intereſt of the unfortunate Sitara, and had obtained for her the aſſurances of a kind reception. But, this princeſs, who had been treated with an inſulting haughtineſs by her brother ſince his captivity, and who too well knew the unrelenting heart of her father, choſe to withdraw herſelf, and could not be found anywhere.

The king of Dilem, entirely unconcerned at her fate, quitted Kharezm without even mentioning her name; and by the advice of the robbers, who now feared the prudence of Saheb, as well as by neceſſity, was obliged to return for ever to his humble, though moſt ungenuine mildneſs.

Among the duties of his charge, the good vizir had yet performed only thoſe that leaſt ſuited his benevolent heart. The virtues which ſprung from the ſoil of peace were his favourite virtues, and he prepared himſelf with delight for exerciſing them in their turn.

A ſpeedy relief for the unhappy victims of the war was the firſt object which engroſſed his attention: the wounded, the widows, the orphans raiſed their imploring hands towards him, and raiſed them not in vain. Although the royal treaſure was exhauſted, he ſupplied their wants with his own wealth; and, by his example, drew voluntary contributions from the moſt tenacious hoarder of riches.

By the ſame means, he was enabled to reward the Turanians for their aſſiſtance; and to redreſs the private wrongs that the exceſſes of Zerir had occaſioned. Next, the balance of juſtice was reſtored

to its natural poiſe, and the weight of blind and impetuous zeal was no longer put in oppoſition with that of merit or demerit. Commerce was protected; public faith revived; manners regulated; cultivation encouraged; and in a ſhort time, the deſolated country aſſumed a new and flouriſhing aſpect.

All this good was operated, not only in the name of Zerir, but the vizir took as much care to conceal the part he had in it, as other miniſters to render themſelves the oſtenſible objects of public gratitude. Far from aiming at ſeparating the glory of the king from the happineſs of the people, he endeavoured to ſtrengthen

their wonted union by the moſt firm ties his generoſity and diſintereſtedneſs could deviſe.

Although the upright and grateful heart of Zerir offered daily thanks to Heaven for the grant of ſuch an inestimable friend, it wanted ſtill another bleſſing, and could not ſmother the ſighs of impatient love.

Saheb, who thought his lot happy in having only a violent but laudable paſſion to correct in his ſovereign, inſtead of a furious and guilty one to oppoſe in a tyrant, at laſt ſpoke thus to Zerir:

"Shall

"Shall the ſon of the great Lohoraſb, the brother of the king of Iran, a prince ſo deſerving by himſelf his exalted rank, deſcend ſo much beneath his dignity as to act like a private man in a tranſaction which requires all the pomp of a noble pride? In your ſtation, paſſions, and even virtues, excuſe not a humiliating ſtep.

"Though juſtice dictated your abrupt and ſubmiſſive ſuit for peace with the king of Dilem, your conduct on that occaſion was not wholly blameleſs; whilſt the ſame in one of your ſubjects would have deſerved the higheſt praiſe. What then will be thought of an unſuitable action when inſpired only by love! A miſ-

placed

placed concession defeats its own purpose by exciting contempt instead of respect. Does the majestic sea overflow in search of the rivulets which are wont to seek an asylum in its bosom?"

"Let us then, immediately, send an ambassador to Zableftan, cried Zeris; let the next rising sun find him on the road of my wishes; let his retinue and the presents he shall convey shew that grandeur which love would have waved. Let him have a full power for making the acquisition of my happiness at any price. If, as fame reports, the prince Zalzer has an absolute sway over the mind of Rustem, and will make the disposal of his sister subservient to his ambition, half

of my kingdom muſt be offered to him; the part of Kharezm which he ſhall be pleaſed to chuſe, will be a lot equal to that of his eldeſt brother; as to me, I ſhall poſſeſs the world in Periſadeh."

"And thus, ſaid Saheb, you will truſt the deareſt intereſt of your heart in other hands than thoſe of friendſhip?"

"How! exclaimed Zerir; will thy generoſity add this precious gem of felicity to the crown of glory thou haſt acquired for me? Muſt I accept an offer which tranſports my ſoul at the hazard of falling again into the gulf from whence thou haſt recovered me? Shall I be able to reſiſt the double attack of my

my impatience when waiting, at the ſame time, for the preſence of my beloved and my friend?"

"Your confidence in my zeal, replied Saheb, will give ſwiftneſs to the hours of expectation; and your prudence will undoubtedly continue the meaſures concerted between us for the welfare of your ſubjects. Let me then have the bird of Periſadeh, that I may haſten the accompliſhment of your deſires."

"Can I part with the little animal who is my confidant, my comforter, cried Zerir! Canſt thou aſk it and have a feeling heart?"

"You

"You well know, returned Saheb, that love is no ſtranger to my ſoul; but I diſclaim a paſſion which prefers its own ſatisfaction to that of the beloved object. If, as the merchants relate, Periſadeh has proclaimed it in many parts of Aſia, that whoever ſhall return her favourite bird, will be intitled to aſk from her bounty any reward conſiſtent with her honour; you may judge of the gratitude you will meet with for the painful ſacrifice, and of the good reception it will inſure to your ambaſſador."

At theſe words Zerir ſighed, and reſigned the bird, whom Saheb had his particular reaſons to demand.

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The vizir knew that Zerir had never ſeen the face of Periſadeh, and that his love was chiefly founded upon a fantaſtical idea, the diſappointment of which might be attended with conſequences he thought his duty to prevent.

The means of effecting this, his prudence had already deviſed; and partly from that motive, partly, in order not to expoſe the impetuous paſſions of his king to be dallied with, and impoſed upon by an artful and ſelfiſh miniſter, he had deſired the embaſſy.

As the ſplendor of his retinue ſhewed the profuſeneſs of love, and drew an inquiſitive

quſitive admiration on his ſteps, he left his attendants in an unfrequented village on the frontier of Zableſtan, and repaired as a private man to the court of Ruſtem.

As ſuch he was admitted into the private appartment of Periſadeh, to whom, having preſented the bird, he ſpoke thus;

"Princeſs, whoſe name is revered in the remoteſt parts of Aſia, deign to pardon the preſumption of your ſlave; and vouchſafe a favourable ear to his prayer. The reward I expect from your unbounded generoſity, and for which I have taken a long and tedious journey,

is

is not the production of earth or ſea; gold, diamonds and gems, I want not. The deſire of my heart is to admire and praiſe the moſt perfect work of Heaven, in ſeeing beauty united to the perfection of the mind, which I know you poſſeſs."

At this ſtrange requeſt, Periſadeh remained for awhile in a motionleſs and ſilent confuſion; but at laſt conſidering the noble mein, the modeſt looks, and the wiſe words of Saheb, as well as the neceſſity of fulfilling her promiſe, ſhe lifted up her veil, ſaying;

"I am bound to grant your demand, O reſpectable ſtranger, though I do not preſume

preſume to anſwer your expectation. Repay my bluſhes by praying the power, whoſe maſter-piece you deſire to ſee, to adorn my mind with as many virtues as I want eternal gifts."

"I adore that mighty power, exclaimed Saheb with a tranſport that all his wiſdom could hardly contain; Zerir, my beloved Zerir, may be happy!"

Theſe unexpected words ſpread freſher roſes on the pure lillies of Periſadeh's cheeks; from the azured ſky of her eyes her ſoul darted rays like thoſe of the ſun in a vernal morning; her lips of coral, which ſurpriſe had half opened, cloſing

with

with a gentle ſigh, concealed the ſhining pearls of the ſea of Golconda, and her ivory hand replaced the cloud of modeſty on the whole treaſure of heavenly charms.

With a mixture of joy and concern, Saheb ſaw the agitation he had cauſed; and with the openneſs of an exalted mind, relieved Periſadeh from her embarraſſment, by declaring to her the motive of his conduct, the love of Zerir, and the truſt which that prince had repoſed in him.

Periſadeh charmed with the prudence of the vizir, and diſdaining an inſincerity which moſt of her ſex would paſs for a virtue,

tue, confeſſed her favourable ſentiments for Zerir; and having adviſed Saheb to appear in his real character, ſhe added with a ſmile;

"You may be aſſured that I ſhall not deny to my father what my indiſcreet bird has revealed to the world; and that ſince the ſecrets of my thoughts have been betrayed by this unſuſpected confidant, I ſhall endeavour to give them the ſanction which virtue requires."

The heart of Saheb was filled with that pure joy which ſurrounds the manſion of ſucceſs when the paths of wiſdom and honour have led to it. He repaired, without

without delay, to the place where he had left his retinue, with which he returned to the court of Ruſtem.

As he had heard that the prince Zalzer was abſent, and ſaw the importance of concluding his negociation of love before unfeeling ambiton could raiſe obſtacles to it; he diſplayed ſo advantageouſly his talent of perſuaſion, and was ſo well ſupported by the princeſs, that he ſoon obtained his demand, and quitted Zableſtan with the ineſtimable treaſure he there ſought for; having firſt ſent a meſſenger to Zerir in order to prepare his impetuous ſoul for the hour of happineſs.

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The tranſports of Zerir at theſe fortunate tidings, proved that the precaution of his vizir on this occaſion was not leſs prudent than on any other; for a becoming firmneſs is more apt to be ſhaken by joy than by grief in a paſſionate but noble mind.

However, the raptures of Zerir were too violent to be laſting: a tender languor ſucceeded them; and while his ſubjects celebrated his approaching felicity by public feſtivals, he counted, in the pleaſing ſolitude of love, the moments which delayed it. Sleep had reſigned his peaceful power over him to the ſoft but agitated inchantment of hope; and

his

his ardent ſighs heated the cooling gales of the night.

On a fair evening, he had remained longer than uſual in an arbour of his delightful garden, and was attentive to the amorous ſongs of the nightingale, when he heard the ſounds of a lute, formed by ſo ſkilful a hand that they contended for harmony with the genuine ſtrain of the muſical bird. Led by the emotion of his heart, he inſenſibly approached nearer the place from whence came the raviſhing accords; and found himſelf at the gate of an adjoining garden, which, unfortunately, had been left open by a negligent ſlave.

With the cautious ſteps of curioſity he advanced towards a pavilion, the openings of which conveyed the bountiful breezes to a damſel who, at the ſame time, enjoyed the delight of a refreſhing bath, and the charms of melody.

Though the perſon who played on the lute was a majeſtic and graceful woman, Zerir obſerved her not, and was no more ſtruck by her tuneful notes. The inchanting form, which the tranſparent water imperfectly ſhaded, drew all his ſoul into his eyes; and cannot be compared for youth and beauty but to the bud of a roſe opened by the morning dew.

As that ſort of admiration, which is the forerunner of love, had reſtrained the impetuoſity of Zerir; he ſaw, in an intranced ſilence, the new ſun of his deſires riſe from the liquid element in his unclouded and glorious array of natural brilliancy; and heard the voice of genuine ſoftneſs requeſt for ſome moments of repoſe, which he was reſolved to diſturb.

No ſooner the attendants of the young nymph were retired, and herſelf compoſed on a green coloured couch which appeared the ſtalk of a beautiful flower, than the enamoured prince entered the pavilion. As love had inſpired him with

prudence, he gently kneeled down by the fair raviſher of his inconſtant affections, to whom he whiſpered his name and raptures, in order to prevent the firſt emotion of her timidity; but was not a little charmed and ſurpriſed to be anſwered by theſe exclamations:

"O Heaven! am I then ſo happy as to ſee the amiable king of Kharezm! a prince ſo much beloved by my father! Can I draw the favourable rays of his eyes upon me before they are centered on the fortunate princeſs Periſadeh! or does a dream delude the too fondly credulous Zulica!"

At theſe words, which artleſs innocence pronounced, Zerir was going to renounce Periſadeh with his lips as he had already done it in his heart, when the muſical lady re-entered the pavilion, and with a ſtern countenance aſked him the reaſon of an attempt ſo unheard and unbecoming.

"Do you know, audacious woman, to whom you ſpeak thus? cried the enraged Zerir."

"I wiſh I were ignorant of it, replied ſhe; for Gulrouz ſhall always reckon in the number of her unhappy days that in which ſhe has ſeen the noble

friendſhip of Saheb ſo baſely betrayed, and the daughter of that worthy man inſulted by a prince ſo indebted to him."

Zerir, awed by the name of Gulrouz, whoſe generous character he held in great eſteem, was atteſting the innocence of his intentions, when Gulrouz interrupting him, ſaid;

"This unſeaſonable hour and improper place admit not this explication. Retire, my Lord; reſpect the roof of your beſt, your only friend; reſpect yourſelf, and what in your rank you owe to the world; and do not oblige a woman to make you remember your duty,

duty, in, perhaps, going farther than her own ſeems to permit."

In ſaying this, ſhe called for the ſlaves who waited her orders; and bidding them to conduct Zulica to her mother, retired; leaving Zerir in prey to the contending paſſions of love, anger and ſhame.

In this agitation of mind, he returned to his palace, where he ſoon found the difference between the pleaſing poignancy of allowed deſires and the piercing thorns of remorſe, which are the growth of forbidden love. But, though honour, equity, goodneſs, reproached him with the inconſtancy of his heart, and claimed

the right of his ſolemn engagement with Periſadeh, they were at laſt ſilenced by the overruling voice of impetuous love, which forced his reaſon, ſo long enſlaved by paſſions, to exert its power in captious arguments. "Why, ſaid he to himſelf, ſhould I pretend to a ſtate of perfection above my ſphere? A ſpiritual being may love as I loved Periſadeh; a material one muſt love as I love Zulica. If the firſt is enabled to raiſe the ſtructure of beauty on the foundation of intellectual accompliſhment, as I have raſhly done, the other cannot avoid finding, ſooner or later, that the ſenſes are the ſureſt guides of his weak nature. I will then break a tie that a too refined and

misplaced notion had formed; and hasten an union required by sentiments better levelled with my frailty, and, perhaps, more suitable to my obligation; for, in raising Zulica to my throne, I acquit myself with her father, without putting my happiness to any hazards."

Notwithstanding this humiliating and false reasoning, Zerir could not entirely disguise to himself the indignity of his conduct towards Perisadeh; he now dreaded her arrival as much as he had desired it; for he well knew that to refuse her after having seen her face would be an affront, which the custom of Asia deemed irreparable.

However, this difficulty embarraſſed him but for a few moments: he wrote to Saheb to find ſome reaſons for conducting back Periſadeh to her father; and enforced this order by the ſtrongeſt words, without explaining the motive of it.

He then ſent for the moſt aſſiduous of his courtiers, to whom he ſaid;

"If you have any hope of my favour, fly on the wings of ambition, and prevent, by this letter, the odious arrival of my vizir."

Servility is productive of ſuppoſitions and miſtakes: a flatterer of his maſter's paſ-

ſions

ſions has a thouſand fleeting proſpects, on which he fixes his eyes by turns, without being undeceived by a ſucceſſion of diſappointment, till his voluntary bondage becomes habitual, and wants no longer to be alleviated by agreeable illuſions. Thus the meſſenger of Zerir ſaw in the confuſed words of his king the diſgrace of Saheb, and in courſe, his own elevation.

Animated by this thought, he was ſo profuſe in his proteſtations of zeal, and ſet out with ſuch alacrity on his journey, that Zerir began to feel that deceiving calm of mind which preceeds the ſtorm of anxieties in the execution of an evil deſign.

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The imprudent prince, inſtead of conſidering the fatal conſequences of his raſh reſolution, meditated only upon the means of accompliſhing it. The reſentment of ſuch an hero as Ruſtem; the intereſted revenge that was likely to excerce the ambitious Zalzer; were of leſs weight in his thoughts than the obſtacles which the virtuous ſeverity of Saphira, and the courageous firmneſs of Gulrouz could oppoſe to his ardent deſire of ſeeing again Zulica.

The manners of the Eaſtern monarchs were not, at that time, arrived to that degree of barbarous deſpotiſm which contempt for women has ſince produced.

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The fair ſex had not yet been inſlaved by ferocious inſolence, and conſequently not loſt its power of ſoftening the ſavage nature of men. But, as the unnatural ſway of royalty had already acquired a great force, Zerir would have been obeyed in moſt of his commands, if he had dared to uſe his authority in the palace of his abſent friend.

A gentler method was yet left to him; and his inclination as well as intereſt determined him to follow it. He waved the privilege of a king, and preſented himſelf to the amiable wife of Saheb as a friend.

Saphira,

Saphira, who could not refuſe the undeſired honour, received it with that becoming reſpect, which, inſtead of humbling thoſe of inferior ſtations, heighten their perſonal dignity, and awe the pride of rank. She heard Zerir with a cold reſerve; without making any objections againſt his deſign, without approving his ſentiments; but, at his intreaties for ſeeing Zulica, ſhe anſwered with a voice of inchanting ſweetneſs;

"Do not inſiſt, O generous prince, upon my compliance with your deſire: and whilſt your vizir is performing the duty of the tendereſt friendſhip towards you, do not wiſh that I forget mine of conjugal

conjugal ſubmiſſion, by acting, without his order, in an affair that moſt concern the honour and repoſe of his family. If, what I dare not to ſuppoſe ſhould happen; if he ſhould command Zulica to break the promiſe of her faith with Elich the ſon of his brave friend Morad, as you intend to do with the princeſs Periſadeh the daughter of the great Ruſtem, I would acquieſce to his will. Till then, I cannot expoſe the unexperienced eyes of youth to the dazzling charms of grandeur, and an innocent heart to the ſeduction of your amiable qualities."

Zerir heard not the laſt words of Saphira; from the moment he feared a ri-

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val in the affections of Zulica, a jealous tranſport deprived him of the uſe of his ſenſes. At laſt he cried;

"Thus the audacious Gulroúz has diſguiſed a ſelfiſh intereſt under the form of generoſity! but I ſhall let her know what is the crime of impoſing on a king; I ſhall puniſh her and her ſon for daring to diſpute the heart of Zulica with me, unleſs the idol of my ſoul is preſented to my longing eyes; unleſs my life receive its doom of happineſs or miſery from her beloved lips."

Saphira could not reſiſt theſe threats; her tenderneſs for her friend, her regard

for

for the glory of Zerir painted to her mind the ſuffering of the one, and the ſhame of the other, with ſuch lively colours, that ſhe immediately ſent for Zulica.

The timorous, but ſincere damſel, advanced with a trembling ſtep, and an ill-concealed joy; and Zerir, at her ſight, being diſarmed of his anger, ſaid;

"O faireſt of thy ſex, haſt thou deceived me? Have thy inſinuating words conveyed a falſe hope to my heart? Doſt thou love Elich?

"I am bidden to love him, anſwered the bluſhing and imprudent maid; but

that

that command, which I reluctantly obeyed, is the tyrant of my ſoul ſince I have ſeen the king of Kharezm."

"I free thee from that unworthy chain, cried Zerir; nature has not made thee ſo perfect to be a ſlave; the empire of the world would be beneath thy inchanting beauty, and thy noble candour. Yes, I ſwear------

"Do not, my lord, interrupted Saphira, do not pronounce a raſh oath; and if your own intereſt is not ſufficient to moderate ſuch dangerous raptures, think, oh! think on the calamities in which you will involve your friends and your

your ſubjects by your injuſtice againſt the princeſs of Zableſtan."

"I ſhall deſcend from my throne before I conſent to place Periſadeh upon it, replied the paſſionate Zerir; let Zulica receive this ſolemn aſſurance; and if you will oblige me to ſpare you the trouble that my preſence excites in your gentle but too timid heart, conſtrain not the favorable ſentiments that your daughter has for me, till a father and a friend has decided on our common happineſs!"

In ſaying theſe words, he retired; and left Saphira overwhelmed in ſhame and grief. As ſhe had reclined on a ſopha, and

was

was opening her arms to Gulrouz, who entered the room with the conſolating countenance of ſympathy, Zulica threw herſelf at her knees, and ſeizing her hands, cried;

"What have I done to offend you, my deareſt mother, that you thus afflict yourſelf at my happy fate? Let Gulrouz complain for her ſon if he perſiſts in loving me: but if our ſlave Ruſka, to whom you have intruſted the conduct of my youth, has anſwered your expectation in inſpiring me with a noble pride, ſurely you muſt rejoice at ſeeing me ſo near a rank which my accompliſhments deſerve, and a crown, after which my heart

heart pants as much for the ſake of the donor as the gift itſelf, although ſo infinitely precious."

At this ſtrange addreſs, Saphira and Gulrouz interchanged the looks of conſternation: both ſighed at the imprudence of parents, who depoſit in ſervile hands the treaſure intruſted to them by nature; and expoſe the innocent minds of their children to the danger of being depraved by the baſe inclinations of low-born and ill-educated inſtructers. But in vain Saphira, overcoming the bluſhes of her merited confuſion, confeſſed her fault to Zulica, and endeavoured to repair it: the work of redreſſing a perni-

cious

cious bent, when paſſions have confirmed it, is not a taſk of a few moments: the fineſt tree muſt produce many a harveſt of bad fruit before the error of its ingraftment can be amended.

While Saphira paſſed her days in the bitterneſs of ſelf-accuſation, Saheb reproached himſelf with preſumption for having accepted the charge of procuring the public good with a ſubordinate power. He had received the letter of Zerir, and was no leſs afflicted than confounded at the ſtrange command it contained.

In the progreſs of a long journey, he had found daily occaſions of knowing the

the amiable character of Periſadeh; and was convinced that the charms and virtues of her mind were even ſuperior to the beauties of her perſon. He was the confidant of her ingenuous heart; of a heart endowed with ſo exquiſite a ſenſibility, that he thought it impoſſible for Zerir to poſſeſs ſo abundant a ſource of bliſs without being overwhelmed in that extatic felicity which delights in promoting the general happineſs.

To this endearing hope, now ſucceeded the horrible proſpect of an inevitable war, of an everlaſting ſhame upon a monarch whom he had flattered himſelf he could render the admiration of his age and a

model

model for posterity. He was destined to the odious employment of bending the bow of disappointment against a princess whom he revered like a supernatural being; of piercing her delicate soul with the arrow of insulting perfidy; and of co-operating in all these evils only in order to indulge a caprice which could not but be succeeded by the most poignant regret.

This last thought decided his perplexed mind: ignorant of the new passion of Zeir, he doubted not that the presence of Perisadeh would cure his distempered reason; and thinking that the duty of a friend ought to absolve the disobedience of

of a voluntary ſubject, he purſued the road of Kharezm; careſully concealing from the princeſs the troubled ſky which he expected would clear itſelf up at the firſt rays of her love-inſpiring eyes.

The baſe courtier, who had already placed the wiſhes of his ambition on the ſummit of ſucceſs, fearing the natural aſcendant that wiſdom has over mean arts, was inraged at the reſolution of Saheb. But as, happily, he knew not the part of his order which concerned Periſadeh, the ſtorm of his officious threats fell only upon his fancied rival in the favour of fortune, to whom, at parting, he denounced the moſt ſevere puniſhment.

A generous mind is not deterred from a good design by the imperious voice of menace. The vizir went on with the encouraging consciousness of acting for the best; or rather was conducted by Providence, whose decrees had destined Saheb to prove, that, if kings, in general, are to be pitied for having bad ministers; a virtuous and upright man is infinitely more worthy of compassion when he fills a place so painful and dangerous, even with a monarch of the least perverted heart.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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